Reviewer's report

Title: Restless legs syndrome and functional limitations among American elders in the Health and Retirement Study

Version: 1 Date: 5 January 2012

Reviewer: Xiang Gao

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This is an interesting study to address an important question: whether RLS is associated with risk of developing disability. The major concern is the way to assess RLS. Based on the IRLSSG recommendations, the diagnosis has to be based on ALL four criteria. However, the questions asked failed to include one of them: “Improvement with activity”. Furthermore, RLS should be “Worsening in the evening or night”. However, the investigators failed to ask whether the symptoms were worsen during night/evening, compared with day time. This would introduce misclassification of RLS diagnosis. It is suggested by the high prevalence of RLS (10.6%) observed in this population. Another concern is that the investigators failed to adjust for baseline ADL/IADL status for their prospective analysis. Baseline physical function is the most important predictor of risk of disability. The investigators also need to conduct subgroup analysis for men and women as a big gender difference of RLS has been seen in previous studies.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I don’t have financial disclosures