Reviewer's report:

**Title:** Multi-morbidity and falls in community-dwelling Canadians over 65 years old: A population-based study exploring associations with number and pattern of chronic diseases

**Version:** 1  
**Date:** 3 November 2013

**Reviewer:** Ellen Freiberger

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript addresses the very important issue of the impact of multi-morbidity on falls. The authors are to the opportunity of such an impressive data base and therefore the possibility of investigating such an important topic. Nevertheless some major and minor comments are to be addressed.

**MAJOR comments:**

**Background Section:**

1. The terms multi-morbidity (second paragraph in brackets (two or more chronic conditions) and chronic disease patterns (last paragraph and another explanation of multi-morbidity = chronic disease patterns) have to be explained better. Specially the last sentence has to be explained why the authors use now chronic disease AND multi-morbidity which is confusing for the reader.

2. As fall is a central topic the definition being used should be stated in the methods sections. In addition by looking at the cited references the number of falls without any injuries could not be found. Only INJ_Q10 “Was the injury the result of a fall?” was found. The authors should explain and state the database, probably the appropriate information missed the reviewer. If the Survey differed between 2008 and 2009 then the authors should state the differences. Furthermore the Fear of Falling item is a “yes-no” question which should also be stated because it differs from the present recommendation to use at least a graded question.

3. Based on the importance for clinical practice the mechanism of COPD acting on falls should be explained more in depth. In addition it should be stated why stroke does not seem to play an important role (chronic disease like Parkinson and dementia are explained but stroke is not addressed again).

**MINOR comments:**

1. The authors should review the References because not all the Refs are cited right e.g.#14 was published in 2011 not in 2008

2. The sentence in the discussion section (4th paragraph: First given the differences in fall rates between individuals with and without chronic disease, the data suggest that CD older adults is not a unified population”.. This sentence does not seem appropriate based on the functional decline level in CD setting.
The sentence would fit better eg “data underline the difference in a CD population with regard to fall risk and rising red flags”…

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests