Reviewer's report

Title: Pulmonary Function and Exercise Tolerance in Pre-dialytic Patients with Chronic Kidney Disease: A Cross Sectional Study.

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Reviewer: Emma Watson

Declaration of competing interests:

I have read through the paper and the authors' response to the reviewers comments. From the comments made by referee 1, the main problem seems to be that of sample size and how representative it is to the wider renal population. Having conducted these types of studies ourselves, we are very familiar with the difficulty in recruiting patients into this type of study and the large number of patients that must be screened in order to recruit just a few. Its well-known exercise type studies are not easy to recruit for and I don’t believe this study is any better or worse than those previously conducted. The problem of a representative study population is also a common one. The types of patients that will consent to a study involving any kind of exercise test is probably naturally biased to the healthier ones, putting a question mark over how far the results are typical of the general renal population, but unfortunately there is no easy solution to this. However, I believe the study has been weakened by excluding those patients over the age of 65, this has vastly reduced their sample population and contributes to a lack of representation, as the over 65’s make up a large proportion of the patient numbers - the upper age limit needs some justification. I therefore don’t fully agree with referee 1, I don’t believe the study is fundamentally flawed, these types of problems are common in conducting studies of this nature.

Referee 1 also states the study adds nothing new to the literature, but the pulmonary function question asked by these authors is novel, however I feel the authors need to justify the investigation of it more clearly in the introduction as to an unfamiliar reader the reason for this unclear and confusing.

I don’t see the same fundamental problems with the manuscript as referee 1, however I also don’t think its publishable in its current form, as suggested by referee 2. There are a few more minor points that need to be addressed before it should be published. I have attached these to this report for your attention.