Reviewer's report

Title: Pathways for definitive diagnosis of solitary pulmonary nodule: a multicentre study in 18 French districts

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Reviewer: egbert f smit

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General
The manuscript by Alzahouri et al contains a retrospective review of the diagnostic pathways of a cohort of 152 persons with solitary pulmonary nodules of which 30 were found to have NSCLC. The average number of investigations performed in 112 patients of whom the details of the process was available was 4 and the median time to diagnosis was 40 days. Although not stated explicitly in the discussion section, the report seems to serve as a basis for further comparison with a time period in which FDG PET is more readily available.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. Diagnostic outcome is provided as cancer or no cancer. Preferably the latter category should be described more clearly, i.e. which alternative diagnosis other than cancer were established in the diagnostic process.
2. 15 patients that were diagnosed with a T1 carcinoma were not operated upon. Could the authors give details of the stage of disease in which the cancer bearing patients wer diagnosed?
3. The authors state that inconclusive tests were uncommon. A clear definition of an inconclusive test must be provided as I suspect that some of these tests were performed to stage presumed cancer rather than establishing a diagnosis.
4. Using Swenson's criteria, it is possible to define an a priori chance of malignancy. It would be of interest to know how these were distributed in the population that form the basis of this report (i.e. the 112 patients that are represented in figure 1)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests