Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of risk factors and activities on the health status of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in China.

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Reviewer: Vanessa McDonald

Reviewer's report:

The authors have reported a cross sectional study of a large cohort of COPD patients in a Chinese population which aimed to assess the vulnerability of COPD patients. The sample size is large but the study is limited to a specific farming province. Whilst I see the value in reporting such a study I have several concerns which I have outlined below.

Please number your comments and divide them into
- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The study aims to assess the vulnerability of COPD patients using the ADO index. Given that the language of ‘vulnerability’ is not common in the COPD literature and clinical practice, I think the authors need to describe what they are referring to and place this in context for their study.

2. The authors need a better description of their study design and flow. The methods start by describing the province and population but then launches in to describing the assessments undertaken. Figure 1 requires some text around who was recruited why were they eligible, why were they not. Once eligible what was the study flow? A more systematic description of the methods would strengthen the manuscript.

3. The authors report the design of a questionnaire. Was this study to validate the questionnaire or had this been performed previously?

4. Para 6 Questionnaire design –the results should not be reported in the methods

5. Measurement of general characteristics – when describing the criteria for categorising cookers and non cookers I would recommend the authors provide some texts as to why this is included. Eg to investigate exposure to bio fuels through wood fired stoves cookers and non cookers….

6. Pulmonary function – Were the drugs eluted or withheld? I expect withheld. Which medications were withheld and for how long?

7. Assessment of COPD severity – The age component of the ADO has been described in terms of best and worst status. I suggest this be changed, it is not how it was developed. The greater the age scored a higher point value.

7. Table 1. I found it difficult to interpret the results presented in table 1. The score column does not make sense as it is not presented as a score? This requires major review
8. There is no reference to fig 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the text. This needs addressing. The coefficient and p value should also appear in the figure.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Clarify what is meant by the final sentence in paragraph 1 – is this a comparison of adults with COPD to older people and children without disease?
2. Para 2 Questionnaire design – reference to normal people should be change to asymptomatic people or those without breathlessness
3. Table 4 – typo severe limitation

Please note that both the comments entered here and answers to the questions below constitute the report, bearing your name, that will be forwarded to the authors and published on the site if the article is accepted.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare I have no competing interests