Reviewer's report

Title: Breathlessness increases the risk of urinary incontinence in men: A community-based study

Version: 1 Date: 19 May 2009

Reviewer: Cara Tannenbaum

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This is a short straightforward article whose originality lies in its attempt to link breathlessness and urinary incontinence in men, which is a novel finding in the literature.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors must attempt to better explain their findings with more detailed analyses, or better justification from the literature in their discussion. I believe it is insufficient to show an association without attempting to explain it or show it as being spurious.

1) For instance, would it be possible to account for comorbidities as an explanation for breathlessness: did the men with incontinence have pulmonary disease (COPD, emphysema) or cardiac disease? Did they have benign prostatic hypertrophy? And how then would this be linked to incontinence? Were the men with incontinence typically physically active or not? It is not clear if this information is available from the interviews.

2) Furthermore, could the authors clarify what type of incontinence the men had (stress, urgency, functional). Is this information available? It would help explain the possible etiological link between incontinence and breathlessness. What about the severity of incontinence. Did the severity of incontinence correlate with the severity of breathlessness (a dose-response effect)?

3) The authors need to provide more compelling hypotheses why breathlessness, but not cough, was associated with incontinence. Normally it is cough, or other reasons why pressure might be increased in the abdominal cavity (exerting a higher intravesical pressure) that lead to incontinence. This needs to be better explained.

Minor essential revisions

1) Table 2 must be better formatted in the typical convention showing OR and confidence intervals. It is hard to read in its present format.

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.