Reviewer’s report

Title: Ageing and smoking contribute to plasma surfactant proteins and protease imbalance with significant correlations to airway obstruction

Version: 2 Date: 3 January 2011

Reviewer: Russell Bowler

Reviewer’s report:

Major comments:

The COPD group has a very high FEV1% suggesting most are mild or moderate COPD. Please describe how many subjects were GOLD 1,2, or 3.

There is distinct clustering of biomarkers in the young controls (Figure 2A,3A,4A) that likely skew the results. Can the regression curves be calculated without this group? Also, what about multivariate analysis?

Minor comments

In the discussion, the authors may want to include a recent BMC publication that clarifies SP-D in BALF of smokers and those with COPD (Moré et al. BMC Pulmonary Medicine 2010, 10:53)

Page 16, last sentence: should be written “included in” not “included into”

Figure 1, instead of box plots, actually data points would be useful to display. Also consider adding a table that summarizes all the biomarker data.

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