Reviewer’s report

Title: Creating scenarios of the impact of COPD and their relationship to COPD assessment test (CAT) scores

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Reviewer: Raffaele Antonelli-Incalzi

Reviewer’s report:

The suggested three level comment does not fit my view of the study and related suggestions. Then, I will provide a single comment.

The elegant study by Jones et al aims at performing a correspondence analysis between the CAT questionnaire and the parent questionnaire SGRQ. Collaterally, but not marginally, it sheds light on the effects of COPD on the health status.

The study uses a sophisticated methodology and demonstrates an excellent agreement between CAT and SGRQ. However, this is to some extent an expected finding given that CAT has been derived from the SGRQ. Indeed, the study does not add to the reader’s knowledge of the rationale for using CAT, which is the object of the previously described development and validation studies. The added value of this study really is in the demonstration that not uncommonly even mild COPD severely impacts health status. This observation complements that on the relationship between COPD severity and impairment of functional capabilities rated by a multidimensional assessment (ERJ supplement 2009).

Physicians in charge of respiratory patients need some practical information about how the rating of health status affects their daily practice. Such an information cannot be easily drawn from the present study which lies more in the field of methodology than in that of clinical application. The prospective assessment of the four CAT categories vs. clinical outcomes and needs of care will clarify this issue. In other terms, these data suggest that the CAT has classificatory properties, but this does not automatically mean that it is clinically useful.

To sum up, the study is of interest, but it might be converted in a short methodological report.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

I declare that I have no competing interests.