Reviewer’s report

Title: Up-to-date on mortality in COPD - report from the OLIN COPD study

Version: 2 Date: 25 September 2011

Reviewer: David Mannino

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The remaining issue I have, though, regards the interpretation of the results (and the authors may have misunderstood my prior comments). Specifically, I believe most would consider the hazards ratio for male sex (1.43) and heart disease (1.42) to be the same and important, even though the latter has CIs that include one (Table 3). Similarly, in Table 4, while these change a bit, both HRs remain in the 1.4 range. Statistical significance is a function of effect size and sample size and it appears that the effect size of heart disease for mortality remains about 1.4. Thus, I still believe that the statement that heart disease does not predict mortality in this data is technically correct (if one holds that a p value of 0.05 is the arbiter of truth), the reality is that heart disease at baseline is as predictive as male sex for mortality (and the data at the bottom of Table 2 confirms this). Thus, I think the conclusions need to be modified slightly to reflect this (but will defer to the editors should they feel otherwise!).

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:

None