Reviewer's report

Title: Interest of the modified Medical Research Council scale for the assessment of dyspnea in daily living in obesity: a pilot study

Version: 4  Date: 6 August 2012

Reviewer: Dennis Jensen

Reviewer's report:

1. Abstract (Page 2, Conclusion, 1st sentence): Avoid use of the word prevalence, particularly considering (i) the small study sample size and (ii) that the subjects in your study were referred for systemic respiratory evaluation and are likely not representative of a 'normal' obese population.

2. The rationale for the study remains poorly developed.

3. The authors should consider the results of a recently published meta-analysis by Gerlach et al. (International Journal of Obesity, doi:10.1038/ijo.2012.49) entitled, "Weighing up the evidence-a systematic review of measures used for the sensation of breathlessness in obesity"

4. Statistical Analysis, Page 6, 2nd sentence: you should provide the reader with a better description of what an mMRC >/= 1 actually represents.

5. Results in discussion, Demographic characteristics, Page 7: As per reviewer #1's recommendation, I think it's very important that you point out that the fifty four patients were referred for systematic respiratory evaluation from the Department of Nutrition of your institution. Why were these subjects referred for respiratory evaluation - because of dyspnea of unknown origin? Information on the reasons for referral are important in as much as such patients/subjects may not be considered "normal" and therefore your results may not be generalizable to the obese population as a whole. In other words, dyspnea may be frequent in this population because they were referred to you because they were symptomatic.

6. In my previous review, I encouraged you to include X-Y plots to demonstrate the strength of the associations between parameters. These plots are important to the interpretation of the data because they will show the reader whether the observed associations are driven by one or two patients, which many will suspect is the case until they see the plots.

7. The discussion is superficial and lacks focus.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
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'