Reviewer's report

Title: Physiological Effects of Ghrelin in Cachectic COPD: substudy of a multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of ghrelin treatment

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Reviewer: Emiel Frans Maria Wouters

Reviewer's report:

the authors reported a randomised study to assess the effects of ghrelin administration on exertional capacity and ventilatory-cardiac parameters. The study is well conducted and data are interesting. Following remarks need to be addressed:

1. The authors report significant effects in the ghrelin treated group. The authors do not discuss the absence of training response in the placebo group, expect an effect on endurance and even a significant change in heart rate at peak and iso-oxygen. The authors must integrate these findings in this group of cachectic COPD patients in the interpretation of their findings;

2. The authors have studied effects of ghrelin in cachectic COPD patients. It would be interesting when body composition data could be provided before and after intervention.

3. the authors report significant ventilatory effects and assume that effects could be explained by improved respiratory muscle strength, reported in the large RCT. it would be interesting when the authors include respiratory muscle strength measurements in their analyses.

Minor essential revisions.

The authors do not inform about co-morbidity profiles in these severe COPD patients.

The authors must stress that the study includes only one woman!

Figure 2 can be limited to VO2 and oxygen pulse;

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:

No competing interests