Reviewer's report

Title: A controlled study of community-based exercise training in patients with moderate COPD

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Reviewer: Surya Bhatt

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The authors conducted a pilot study using a randomized controlled trial design to assess impact of a community based exercise intervention on pertinent respiratory outcomes in subjects with moderate COPD. They found that a 12 week intervention at local gyms with the help of personal trainers is very feasible and resulted in impressive differences in respiratory quality of life, dyspnea and functional capacity, as well as in peripheral muscle strength. The intervention is novel and has significant implications for the way pulmonary rehabilitation is administered, especially considering poor compliance due to socioeconomic reasons. I have a few minor comments.

1. The study was not blinded. I am not sure how this would be possible, but the authors should mention this under limitations of the study.

2. In the Introduction, the authors claim that COPD is treatable with exercise. While exercise is important in ameliorating the systemic consequences of COPD, this might be an overstatement.

3. Some subjects withdrew due to exacerbations. What was the frequency of exacerbations in the control arm? While this was an aim of this study, this is interesting as pulmonary rehabilitation has been shown to be associated with a lower rate of exacerbations. Of those who completed, were there non responders, or did all subjects show an improvement.

4. As the authors acknowledge, pulmonary rehabilitation has multiple components. How is the current intervention different from Physical therapy? What instructions were given to the trainers? This will help employ these interventions in practice.

5. Did the authors also perform a paired t test to assess within group changes with intervention? This should be clarified in Table 2 as well.

6. Please include values for habitual activity levels for both groups in Results.

7. Please check units for TDI in Table 1.