Reviewer's report

Title: Protocol for a mixed-methods study of supplemental oxygen in pulmonary fibrosis

Version: 3 Date: 16 May 2014

Reviewer: Kathleen Lindell

Reviewer's report:

The literature begs for this important study. That said, after careful review, my questions and recommendations to make this study stronger would be the following:

1. How will the different types of pulmonary fibrosis be defined? Stratification of the different types of pulmonary fibrosis would enhance this research.
2. Is there a reference for the sentence on page 3, sentence beginning on line 82. This is worded very strongly with a supporting reference?
3. On page 4, lines 95-97 - this is another statement that lacks validation. In the US, oxygen cannot be prescribed unless the patient qualifies for it. That would be the sound, quantifiable evidence that explains why it is important.
4. I understand the challenges patients are faced with when prescribed supplemental oxygen, but I am concerned with the use of subjective measures to measure improvement (pg 8-9). Will the activity monitor measure oxygen saturation and will this be available for immediate feedback for the patient? I think this study would be much stronger than it already is, if there was an objective measure also included to monitor improvement/digression. The teaching has always been that desaturation does not equate to dyspnea, and this research would be an important way to add to confirm or disclaim this teaching.
5. Otherwise, I think the methods and data analysis plan are appropriate.

Thank you for asking for my review.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.