Reviewer's report

Title: Validity of a questionnaire-based diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in a general population-based study

Version: 1 Date: 29 October 2013

Reviewer: geertjan J wesseling

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Major comments:
These data have been collected a number of years ago. Even taking into account that comparisons of outcomes of questionnaires and result of spirometry in large populations have remained scares ever since, the fact that spirometry is now considered mandatory to establish a diagnosis of COPD reduces the scientific value of this analysis. Also, having only prebronchodilaor lung function measures is a further limitation. As these data have been collected many years ago, this shortcoming obviously cannot be taken care of.

The questionnaire is not provided with the manuscript and will not easily be found by many readers. Whether it is frequently used cannot be confirmed.

Minor comments
It may be true that a bronchodilator response suffers from a lack or reproducibility may be correct but that is not relevant to establish a diagnosis of COPD, as it is not so much the improvement in FEV1 resulting from the administration of a bronchodilator that is being tested, but the FEV1/FVC ratio after (maximal) bronchodilation.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests