Reviewer’s report

Title: Can cholesterol be used to distinguish pleural exudates from transudates? Evidence from a bivariate meta-analysis

Version: 2

Date: 16 February 2014

Reviewer: ebrahim razi

Reviewer’s report:

Dear Editor

The manuscript was reviewed. Please revised as below comments:

Page 3, line 8: the cause of pleural effusion many cases is para-pneumonic effusion and according to the place of study the most common cause of pleural effusion is not related to malignancy.

Page 4, line 1: “a number of studies ... “references is necessary.

Page 5, paragraph 3, line 9: the references of cut of point (60mg/dl) is necessary.

Page 6, paragraph 2: the sentences about the omission of studies less than 20 patients is repeated again and it is better to delete.

Page 6, paragraph 3, line 7: the selection of exudative pleural effusion based on “clinical diagnosis” is not reliable. For example in lung cancer, in many cases, the pleural effusion may be transudative such as superior vena cava syndrome or para malignant effusion.

Page 6, paragraph 4: the difference between sensitivity and specificity of pleural cholesterol and pleural to serum cholesterol is large, it is better to explain this difference by authors.

Page 7, discussion: It is better the discussion begins with main conclusion of study.

Page 9, paragraph 4 line 5: the difference between cut-off value in other studies is depended to centers where the patients were admitted. For example in centers that cardiac patients with pleural effusion were admitted, the cut-off value for cholesterol is lower than cancer specialized institute.

The kinds of study patients with pleural effusion effect on cut-off value of pleural cholesterol.

Table one: please correct the country of Razi E (32) to IRAN, please delete the “Kashan” word.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.