Reviewer's report

Title: Discriminative and predictive properties of disease-specific and generic health status indexes in elderly COPD patients

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Reviewer: Takashi Hajiro

Reviewer's report:

The authors examined SGRQ and MDA on their prognostic properties in patients with COPD. By analyzing large sets of data, the authors concluded that both SGRQ and MDA showed inadequate abilities on predicting patients' prognosis. I would like the authors to consider following points to clarify their manuscript.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. In introduction, it is unclear why the authors hypothesize that a generic measure could provide similar prognostic value as a disease-specific one could. According to their logic, a generic one should be superior to a disease-specific one with regard to predicting prognosis in COPD patients with comorbidities.

2. Although SGRQ has been recognized enough as a disease-specific measure, it may be uncertain that the Multi-Dimensional Assessment (MDA) be regarded as a generic health status measure. Was there any reason not to use "SF-36" as a generic measure?

3. The authors are advised to give clear reason why they adopted those cut-off scores of the SGRQ dividing study population into three groups. Why SGRQ score 3 and 34?

4. Cause of death, especially pulmonary or non-pulmonary causes, in this study population is necessary, since the authors emphasized importance of comorbidities.

5. The authors concluded that both SGRQ and MDA had a similar prognostic value. Then, the authors are advised to communicate how their study is unique and what add to our knowledge.

Takashi Hajiro, MD.

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.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.