Reviewer's report

Title: COPD related fatigue: Evaluation of factors associated with fatigue in COPD and comparison with healthy elderly subjects

Version: 1 Date: 16 July 2009

Reviewer: Esther Barreiro

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COPD RELATED FATIGUE: EVALUATION OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FATIGUE IN COPD AND COMPARISON WITH HEALTHY SUBJECTS

General comment:
This study has attempted to explore fatigue in COPD patients, as compared to a population of healthy individuals, using the multidimensional fatigue inventory. The study seems to have been properly conducted from a methodological standpoint. However, I have a series of concerns that are summarized as follows:

Specific comments:
1.- Title is excessively long and should be shortened. In my opinion, the “comparison with healthy subjects” is not necessary at this level.
2.- More emphasis should be made on the clinical applicability and potential benefits to both the patients and physicians of the study results. As abovementioned, the study appears to be well conducted from a methodological standpoint, but it suffers from a clear emphasis in its potential beneficial effects at the clinical practice.
3.- Rationale and hypothesis for conducting the study should be made more explicitly in the Introduction.
4.- Was ethical approval obtained from the institutional boards before carrying out the study? In keeping with, did patients and control subjects give their written informed consent before entering the study? Were all they properly informed on the characteristics of the study? This is clearly missing from the current version, and this is important when working with living beings.
5.- I wonder whether this investigation actually fits within the scope of the Journal, since the clinical relevance of this tool is not clear, or at least to this reviewer.
6.- I found the Results section somehow confusing and excessively long, especially because most of the study data are already shown in both Tables and Graphs. This section needs improvement and reduction of its length. Figures should be accompanied by legends, at least I have not seen them.
7.- A summary of main findings would also be very useful.
8.- In the Discussion, more emphasis on the clinical applicability of the models analyzed should be made throughout.
9.- It should also be underscored that the present investigation has been exclusively supported on the basis of pharmaceutical companies.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests