Reviewer's report

Title: Using respiratory rate and thoracic movement to assess respiratory insufficiency in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis: a preliminary study

Version: 2 Date: 26 November 2012

Reviewer: Paul H Gordon

Reviewer's report:

The investigators revised their examination of clinical measures and pulmonary function tests in 42 patients with ALS, finding, in a retrospective design, that high respiratory rate and low thoracic movement at the time of diagnosis significantly predicted timing of NIV. The authors were overall quite responsive to comments by the reviewers and the paper is much improved. Some very minor comments on style follow that should be considered discretionary:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
None

Minor Essential Revisions:
None

Discretionary Revisions:
Abstract, last line of background: ‘We examined whether’ might be simpler than ‘we wished to clarify’…
Methods, Design, page 5, line 10: We determined that the 3 month… How? Maybe better to re word, for example, The 3 month time window was assumed to reflect…
Results, page 8, line 1. Complete enough is somewhat unusual wording. Suggest the records of 42 patients were adequate for analysis.
Discussion, line 2. Suggest …for the development…
Discussion, page 10, third paragraph, line 1, limitations. To avoid using the word ‘study’ 3 times, suggest begin the second sentence with ‘First, the retrospective design compared…

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'