Reviewer's report

Title: Developing an algorithm to identify people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) using administrative data

Version: 3  Date: 5 April 2012

Reviewer: Ann-Britt Wiréhn

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The author’s clarification of the three different study populations and table 3 including the sensitivity (which is also presented in the result) improves the article.

Minor Essential Revision:

#1 The Result part gives a clear picture of the calculations. Please check all figures though, since some estimates differ from those in the tables, e.g. sensitivity in the B population – 45.9 vs 44.8, and PPV – 64.8% vs 65.0% etc..

Major compulsory revision:

2# In the abstract’s Result part, there are, however, some misleading and vague sentences, for example the first: The algorithm identified from 70.7 – 72.6% of the patients. Reading this I get it as you have a sensitivity of 70.7 - 72.6%, but in fact you refer to the PPV in the A population, am I right? Further, it is difficult to understand the populations of 532 vs 2895 patients since you in the abstract’s Method not mention anything about them.

I strongly suggest you to rewrite the result part in the abstract and also insert the 29.7 % sensitivity. My opinion is that you should use the terms sensitivity and PPV, otherwise it has to be of no doubt what you refer to, i.e. correct identified patients among ALL DISEASED patients, or correct identified patients among ALL IDENTIFIED patients.

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.