Reviewer's report

Title: Risk factors of hospitalization and readmission of patients with COPD in Hong Kong population: Analysis of hospital admission records

Version: 1 Date: 8 May 2011

Reviewer: Wan Tan

Reviewer's report:

General comments:
This is a retrospective analysis of the records on hospital discharges for COPD over 2 years contained in the administrative database the public health care system in Hong Kong. The authors had focused on unplanned admissions and readmissions for COPD and examined the associated determinants, and provided an estimate of the health care cost.

In general the methods used in the analysis are appropriate and clearly described. The results are consistent with previously reports on the same topic, but they adds to the message of the importance of social factors on readmission for COPD in an Asian country.

Major Revisions:
1) Throughout the manuscript the standard of English requires improvement for clarity before it could be acceptable for publication in the journal. There are numerous typographical and grammatical errors, incomplete and awkward sentences. The following are examples:
   Background: Para 2, 2nd sentence: COPD admission rate was doubled up”?
   The sentence “ A study in …. hospitalization” needs rephrasing.
   Para 4, 2nd last sentence needs rephrasing.
   Methods: Last para, last sentence needs rephrasing
   Results: 4th para is unclear.
   Discussion: Many unclear and sentences.

2) Cost of COPD: This was stated as an aim in the study, but was not included in the title of the paper. The authors did not provided any detail of the method used for computing this in the method section. It is therefore unknown how this was arrived at. The cost was stated in a last paragraph in the results section, with an incomplete reference to unpublished work[ ref 15]. As this is outside the scope of this analysis it should be removed.

3) Results section ; para4: It is not necessary to repeat the values [shown in table 1] in the text as well

4) Discussion:
a. This is long and somewhat rambling.

b. The authors have not discussed potential limitations in the study: retrospective nature of the study; any change in ICD coding from ICD9 to ICD10, etc.

c. Para 2, 2nd sentence: The authors stated that higher unplanned readmission rate for men versus women could be due to a higher smoking rate in men. The rationale of this is unclear. While smoking may be an explanation for a higher prevalence of COPD in men, it is unclear how this would result in a higher unplanned readmission rate too.

d. Para 2, 3rd sentence: ‘Elderly home residents could be sicker’ . The needs rephrasing and a reference.

e. Para 4, 5,6 are long and somewhat rambling. They could be more focused and shortened by ½.

Minor revisions:
1) Throughout the manuscript, the word “elderly home” is ambiguous and should be replaced by standard terms such as ‘nursing homes’ or ‘care homes’.

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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