Reviewer's report

Title: A Cross-sectional Study of Alterations of Serum Biomarkers Associated with Lung Ventilation Function Impairment in Coal Workers

Version: 3 Date: 15 August 2011

Reviewer: Ilker Ates

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer’s Report on the revised manuscript

First of all, I want to thank the authors for giving attention to my suggestions then, correcting and re-arranging the manuscript. The revised manuscript will be more interesting and attractive for the researchers studying within this subject. I want no major revisions except a few minor corrections and additions that will help for the fluency of the text. I expect the authors to reconsider my few suggestions which I obtained from the revised manuscript.

General:

QUESTION

1) In the abstract section, the authors have mentioned “non-smoking” statement but no any details were given in the manuscript about how they check out for smoking habit of the subjects. I think it is necessary to give brief, informative and detailed information about this in the text. This will be helpful for the readers to understand and also to supply the integrity of the study.

Minor Essential Revisions

Methods:

Subjects:

1) Paragraph 1; last sentence, The sentence related with the approval of the Ethics Committee should be the last sentence of the “Subjects” section not of the first paragraph. Please move this sentence to the bottom of the section.

2) In pulmonary ventilation function tests section; The first sentence should be re-written as “--- utilizing an automatic pulmonary functions testing system called Masterscreen PFT (JAEGGER, Germany)”. 

Discussion:

1) Paragraph 4, line 5 and 6, the sentence should be re-written as “--- study indicating the increases of serum MMP-9 ---”. I’m insisting on this because authors corrected the sentence as “---study that indicated that ---” but lots of “that” following each other are disturbing the sense and fluency of the sentence.

2) Paragraph 6, line 3, the sentence should be re-arranged as “--- MMPs and cathepsins, generating destructive and ---”. 

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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