Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessing functional mitral regurgitation with exercise echocardiography: rationale and clinical applications

Version: 3 Date: 30 October 2009

Reviewer: Rosa Sicari

Reviewer’s report:

In the present manuscript Bigi et al. address an important clinical issue such as the use of exercise stress echocardiography for the assessment of functional mitral regurgitation. The manuscript is clearly written and proposes diagnostic indications in this clinical setting.

There are a few issues that authors should address:

1. Please provide not only indications but also a diagnostic algorithm for the clinical use of exercise stress echocardiography;
2. Please discuss the absence of functional testing in the heart valve disease guidelines of the ESC vs. the AHA in which the technique is recommended in particular subsets of patients;
3. Other parameters may enrich the exercise exam in the evaluation of functional mitral regurgitation, contractility expressed as force frequency relationship or the onset of ULC
4. Due to the nature of the journal more images should be uploaded.

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'