Reviewer’s report

Title: Characteristics and outcomes of patients with dyspnoea as the main symptom, assessed by prehospital emergency nurses- a retrospective observational study

Version: 0 Date: 09 Apr 2020

Reviewer: G Lee

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for submitting an interesting paper. Dyspnoea is one of the primary clinical findings that must be acted upon and its relevance in the pre-hospital environment. However, my main concern with the paper is that it is very detailed and with multiple aims and thus the main message is slightly lost. Quite a bit of the date could be better presented in tables and this will help with the word count.

The discussion needs to be more focused and concise. In the context of the objectives, what is the main message you wish to convey? Is it about the differences in dyspnoea triage or how dyspnoea is managed by patients/ EMS?

- Although the finding that there are multiple ICD codes used, the key question is whether this is important? For clinicians reading the paper- they will want to know what we should do- should we reduce the number of codes applied or is there another approach?
- For example, how many participants add mixed respiratory and CV diseases?
- With AF rates of 22%- how many were new diagnoses?
- I am not surprised that many patients do not call EMS with dyspnoea as many will have long-standing SoB symptoms and therefore it is only when symptoms are severe, they will call on EMS.
- If there are such high death rates in the follow-up period (esp 1 year), should we be surprised? And does EMS intervention make any difference?
I would suggest that is it more the case that these patients have multiple comorbidities and are elderly and therefore the likelihood of dying is high anyway?

Some recommendations on practice would be useful.
The appendices in Excel would be better in table format that can be included in the paper so readers can review the characteristics, etc.

I hope this is helpful and it is very important data and highlights the important issues around managing dyspnoea, especially in the pre-hospital setting.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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