Reviewer's report

Title: Identifying common impairments in frail and dependent older people: Validation of the COPE assessment for non-specialised health workers in low resource primary health care settings

Version: 2 Date: 21 May 2015

Reviewer: Richard Biram

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review this manuscript

The paper itself describes a pragmatic approach to a difficult problem experienced in low and middle income countries and might have considerable application to such areas. The potential utility of the tool which has been developed is large, and I believe this is an important and interesting study which would be quite suitable for publication.

I found the question posed by the authors to be well described and the methodology appeared to me to be very thorough.

The authors clearly set out their reasoning behind choosing the different facets of the tool they have developed, how they trained staff to administer the tool, and their plan to demonstrate its efficacy versus a reasonable gold standard.

The data appear to be sound and the statistical methodology appears to me to be reasonable.

The authors clearly state limitations of their work and I believe their conclusions are very reasonable based on the results presented here.

I believe that the authors have clearly acknowledged any related work which has been undertaken, and there is a clear section describing the contribution of each author to this work and acknowledgments of financial support provided to undertake the study.

The title and abstract accurately reflect the content and findings of the overall document.

Discretionary revisions

I did not identify a section describing any ethical considerations which were undertaken prior to the undertaking of the study, and a note to the authors would be to ensure that the adherence to any local ethical guidelines for the undertaking of the study are described.

Of minor importance, I would recommend the authors review the use of the word ‘secular’ (line 88) – is this the correct term? It does not seem to make sense in the context of the rest of the sentence and I suspect it may be an autocorrect error.
Also – line 162, sarcopenia is spelt incorrectly I believe.

If I could make a further minor suggestion to the authors, as a matter of personal taste.

Throughout the document, there are used interchangeably the terms COPE assessment or CHW assessment, and/or clinician assessment or EASY-care assessment.

At times this can make it quite difficult to understand which group is being described, as the terminology is prone to change from one sentence to the next. It would be useful to the reader to try to keep to one format or the other when describing the outcomes from each group for ease of understanding.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.