Reviewer's report

**Title:** Gastrointestinal symptoms, inflammation and hypoalbuminemia in chronic kidney disease patients: a cross-sectional study

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 16 March 2015

**Reviewer:** Shona Methven

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a well written manuscript which explores the cross-sectional relationship between GI symptoms and hypoalbuminaemia in participants with stages II to IV of CKD in the Chronic Renal Insufficiency Cohort (CRIC) population. The CRIC study is a major US study which was robustly conducted and has already stemmed >60 publications. The authors state that this specific research question has not been studied in this population before, making it novel.

Major compulsory revisions

None

Minor essential revisions

Typographical errors:
- discussion paragraph 7 - "transferrin(g)"
- conclusion "studied" rather than studies
- reference 12 creatinine is mis-spelt

Discretionary revisions

The aim as stated in the final paragraph of the introduction is quite vague and does not crystallise the purpose of the study for the reader (unlike the conceptual diagram in Figure 1 which is extremely helpful). This would benefit from being redrafted so that the reader is clear on the aim.

The inclusions and exclusions of the study cohort are described in the methods - this might be easier to follow for the reader if presented in a simple flowchart (as suggested by the STROBE guidelines).

Figure 2 - it is stated in the text that figure 2 demonstrates differences across the groups, but there is no annotation describing the results of a specific statistical test in the barchart - perhaps a chi squared test for trend could be should in the figure? Also the label of the y axis could be more succinct perhaps "Participants who report GI symptom (%)" and this would allow the % symbol to be removed from the axis numbering itself.

Discussion. The authors report that the study population is representative of a US CKD population. However there will be important international differences which would be helpful to acknowledge in consideration of external
Paragraph 4 of discussion- the word "respectively" is used when only one result is given, is there a figure missing?

**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