Reviewer's report

Title: Does cycling make the heart flutter? Six year follow-up of the Taupo Cycle Challenge

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Reviewer: Brian Olshansky

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript shows that those individuals who participated in the Taupo Cycle Challenge are at no greater risk for atrial fibrillation in the general population. This is an interesting report that indicates that this level of activity in this population that participates in this study does not incur increased risk of atrial fibrillation at least as measured by hospitalization. There are several important weaknesses of this manuscript. These will incur compulsory revisions 1. The participation rate was 43% of the group. It is unclear if this is a representative cohort of the entire cycling. 2. It is unclear how much exercise the national population in the same area accomplishes. There is no real mention of this here. 3. These data do not prove that cycling was not associated with atrial fibrillation. This these to be clarified in the manuscript. All it shows is that for these individuals who participated, there is no increased risk for atrial fibrillation hospitalization. However, it is important to recognize that atrial fibrillation can be asymptomatic, it may not require hospitalization, it may be symptomatic but the individual does not elect to do anything about it or that the treatment is outside of the hospital. It is also unclear for both groups how many have atrial fibrillation and are either symptomatic or asymptomatic but do not recognize that they have atrial fibrillation. Therefore, the authors have not proven by any means that cycling at this level does not cause atrial fibrillation. However, this manuscript adds to the literature in the sense that this level of activity does not appear to be particularly associated with atrial fibrillation. That does not mean that more intense endurance activity would not be associated with atrial fibrillation. These caveats need to be in the manuscript. Additionally, it is unclear if the disciplines accurately calculated the amount of physical activity performed over time. For the "control" group, it is unclear how much exercise they perform.

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 have no competing interests.