Reviewer's report

Title: Reliever salbutamol use as a measure of exacerbation risk in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2015

Reviewer: Takashi Motegi

Reviewer's report:

Comment to authors
I would like to thank for the opportunity to review this interesting paper. This paper is a new attempt to the prediction of progression from everyday indicators. I would like to make the following comments:

Major Compulsory Revisions
Page 8, line 131
Why short period is 21 days? Please show a clearer reason.

Page 10, line 158
How much is the number of each groups of reliever use?
I want to know how much the patients are using a large amount of reliever. Patients of higher reliever use may not prescribe appropriate treatment. Do you think that there is such a possibility?

Minor Essential Revisions
Page 10, line 169
"135%" is typo?

Table 1
"Patients taking ICS at baseline" 225 (2.#8) # (28) typo?

Discretionary Revisions
Page 8, line 133~
As you say in Discussion part, I do not know whether this cut off point is appropriate.

How about if you try the ROC analysis for the presence of exacerbation on the basis of the number of reliever uses?

Page 13, line 212~
In the cases with LAMA and LABA (+ICS) combination therapy, the frequency of use of SABA might change. In the future, you should be also consider the case where a combination of LAMA not only ICS / LABA.
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#