Reviewer’s report

Title: Plasma Chemokine Signature Correlates with Lung Goblet Cell Hyperplasia in Smokers with and without Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Version: 2 Date: 17 June 2015

Reviewer: Venkateshwar Mutyam

Reviewer’s report:

General Comments
This article briefly highlights the correlation between increased systemic chemokine levels in current active smokers compared to nonsmokers and COPD subjects and its association with goblet cell hyperplasia. The relative depth of the manuscript in terms of the study of inflammatory cytokine levels being influenced by smoking leading to GCH is a reasonable contribution to the literature. However, one of the main conclusions of GCH being associated with current smoking in this study has been an important finding in author’s recent previous publication, which should be addressed and acknowledged in this study.

Discretionary Revisions:
1. Page 4: Line 23: “See Figure 2” wording should be moved to line 20
2. Page 5: Line 19: findings suggest that smoking (delete these), Line 22 – add subjects after COPD
3. The small sample size in this study should also be acknowledged up front

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. In Figure 1, a mucosal biopsie image of COPD subject should be added for comparison.
2. In Figure 3, the bottom of graph bars should be labeled as non-smokers and current smokers for easier understanding of the reader.
3. The moderate correlation between plasma CXCL8 levels and MVD should be elaborated in the discussion section.
4. Elaborate the abbreviation EGFR in the abstract section.
5. Page 7: Line 10: Authors talked about higher counts of eosinophil in chronic bronchitic group. Were the eosinophil counts done? If so a brief mention in methods section would be sufficient.
6. Page 4: Line 20-23: The significant higher levels of plasma chemokine CCL7 in COPD group compared to nonsmoker and healthy smoker group should be addressed in discussion.
7. Page 6: Line 18-19: Authors cited a publication which showed higher levels of sputum CXCL8 in COPD subjects compared to healthy smokers and nonsmoking
controls. The present study shows significantly higher levels of

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Authors should consider acknowledging their recent publication (PMC4315442) in the current study, since it is closely related.

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