Reviewer’s report

Title: Employment of an Algorithm of Care Including Chest Physiotherapy Results in Reduced Hospitalizations and Stability of Lung Function in Bronchiectasis

Version: 1 Date: 28 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Michal Shteinberg

Reviewer’s report:

General: This is a retrospective review of 43 newly diagnosed or newly referred patients with bronchiectasis who were offered a "bundle" of recommended care. This bundle included chest physiotherapy with high frequency chest wall oscillations (HFCWO), hypertonic saline for 95% of patients, macrolide antibiotics (35%) and inhaled antibiotics where appropriate. The authors show that these patients have a reduction in exacerbations when on treatment compared to the preceding year. While this study emphasizes the importance and benefit of good care in bronchiectasis, the findings are not new, and were described in a larger scale, multicenter study (Chalmers et al., Am J Respir Crit Care Med. 2018).

Major:

The authors focus on HFCWO, and present the study objective as looking at this intervention (the title and last two paragraphs of the "introduction"). However, as a "bundle" of care was introduced, the effects of HFCWO cannot be isolated. The reduction in exacerbations may have resulted from the other interventions- inhaled hypertonic saline, macrolides- both proven to effectively reduce exacerbations. The manuscript should focus on showing that the treatment algorithm as a whole, not just airway clearance, is effective in reducing severe exacerbations.

Minor:

1. Non-CF bronchiectasis should be replaced by "bronchiectasis"- see review by Chalmers, Elborn.

2. Table 1: what is "usual care?"

3. Page 8, line 41 :"The patients that met criteria:" should be "the patients who met criteria"

4. Page 10, line 46: "Despite greater than 45% of the patient's not requiring hospitalization pre-algorithm or post-algorithm…."- unclear sentence.

5. Table 2: please include etiology of bronchiectasis. Were there patients with PCD? COPD? NTM?
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Are the methods appropriate and well described?
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