Reviewer’s report

Title: Prognostic value of cardiopulmonary exercise testing in patients with systemic sclerosis

Version: 1 Date: 08 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Harrison Farber

Reviewer's report:

In this revision Ewert et al have responded to the questions and suggestions raised by the Reviewers and Editors during the initial review. The authors have responded to these issues appropriately and have improved the manuscript - especially with the changing of the control group. That said, there are a few remaining points to clarify.

1) The authors have now compared to SSc-ILD patients to SSc-no-ILD patients. The authors should give further detail on how the parameters (CT/PFTs) were chosen to separate the two groups.

2) The comparisons in the subgroups with RHC are somewhat confusing. Although most clinical parameters and hemodynamics were worse in the RHC group (as would be expected), the CPET parameters were worse in the non-RHC group. Since the authors note that the centers used the CPET as a predictor of need for RHC, this disparity would suggest that the centers did not use the CPET appropriately in all cases or the CPET is not sensitive enough to be used for this purpose. Nor was there a difference in CPET metrics re prognosis. This does temper, to some degree, the prognostic value of CPET and the premise of the manuscript.

3) There are several places where grammar could be changed to improve flow and readability: e.g. Right heart catheterization was performed according to the guidelines… e.g. rather than "had more often a RHC" - more frequently underwent RHC

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

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