Reviewer’s report


Version: 0 Date: 30 Apr 2018

Reviewer: Pietro Giorgio Calo

Reviewer's report:

A very interesting and well conducted study.

The limitations of the study have been completely and correctly described.

In the study selection chapter you said: "articles published in the English or Chinese language" but I did not find articles in Chinese in the references. Were all excluded?

I think you need to specify better in the text what do you mean for older patients.

I think you need to better specify in the text what do you mean for smoking status: non smokers vs smokers (> 1 cigarette or other?)

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

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

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