

Review of: "Risk Factors of Pulmonary Embolism in Patients with Acute Exacerbation of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: A retrospective clinical study"

Kristian Bagge

Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

Thanks for asking me to review this study. It addresses an important point, that pulmonary embolism can be difficult to diagnose in acute exacerbations of COPD, and it is important to know the risk factors, since timely diagnosis is important for the outcome. Thorough work has been done collecting a lot of data on the patients. I do, however, have some concerns regarding data analysis.

1. I am missing some detailed information on the timelines for the patients. When was the PE diagnosis made? How long was the patient hospitalized when the diagnosis was made? All data on clinical observations and laboratory findings are they from time of admission or time of diagnosis of PE? Regarding this, total hospitalization time would be wrong to include in the multivariate analysis. It is a consequence of the complication (PE) and not a contributor.
2. Do you have any information on medication? In particular was prophylactic anti-thrombotic treatment given for the immobilized patients?
3. You report cough as significant, while it has a CI of 0.106 - 1.074 ?
4. I would be very hesitant about concluding from MRC data. Especially if it was collected while the patient suffers from acute dyspnea, there might be some bias in the way they respond. You have chosen to include the number of exacerbations per year as an indicator of the progression of COPD in the multivariate analysis, which I find a solid choice.

In conclusion, the manuscript has some interesting points, but is not ready for publication in its current form. Furthermore, a proofreading of the English is recommended.