Reviewer 1., v.1

Comments to the Author

This manuscript describes the impact of comorbidities on mortality in subjects with and without airflow obstruction. The manuscript is based on a population-based survey and the analysis is made separate for the sexes. The study therefore adds some new and relevant information. There are, however, some issues.

Major comments
1. The authors claim to study COPD. If I understand correctly, the study groups are defined from the results of spirometry only, thus neither including exposure to noxious inhalants nor symptoms. Therefore, I think the authors should state that they study airflow obstruction rather than COPD. Airway obstruction is not a very good term in this case, since airflow obstruction can result from either bronchial disease or emphysema.

2. The authors use three different definitions of airflow obstruction. While I think it is valuable to perform the analysis of mortality for airflow obstruction according to both the GOLD and the LLN criteria, I strongly disagree with the use of a cut-off in percent of predicted for definition of normality (see e.g. Miller & Pedersen, Eur Respir J 2010). In my opinion, LLN should be used for this purpose.

3. The information obtained on comorbidities is very meagre. Essentially nothing is mentioned in the Methods section. In the Discussion, it seems that the information was based on questionnaires only. If so, this is a serious limitation. Information that is much more detailed and a thorough discussion of this subject is required.

4. Why was height not included as a covariate in the Cox’s regression models?

5. It appears a bit odd that mortality among men was considerably higher in the “COPD” group than in the NLF group when the age at death was almost identical. I suppose this results from the NLF group being quite a bit younger than the “COPD” group at inclusion. Can the authors please confirm?

6. The Discussion is rather wordy and reiterates some of the results. It can be condensed without loss of information.
7. The LLN-COPD analysis should, in my opinion, be included in the body of the manuscript rather than be hidden in a supplement.

8. I find no figure legends.