

Reviewer 3 v.1

Comments to the Author

This manuscript addresses an area of need in the treatment of patients with noncystic fibrosis bronchiectasis. While it has its limitations (which are appropriately addressed), it is a welcomed addition to the literature for these patients.

Comments to Authors:

The manuscript by Barto et al investigates the role of high-frequency chest wall oscillation (HFCWO) vest therapy in patients with non-cystic fibrosis bronchiectasis. This is an area with very little supportive evidence, though it is quite a common practice. The patients were identified from a large registry which inherently has several limitations, though the authors address these limitations well. They proceeded with chart review of a subset of patients in an attempt to ensure findings are, in fact, representative of the patient population. Overall, HFCWO therapy appears to have benefit in non-cystic fibrosis bronchiectasis patients in that hospitalizations are reduced and overall respiratory health is improved.

Major Comments:

1. Page 6, Methods, Study Population: The authors did not address if and how they excluded patients with cystic fibrosis. While patients were included if they had certain ICD codes, did the authors also ensure that codes for cystic fibrosis were not also present? Depending on who prescribes the vest therapy (pulmonologists vs. other), the correct coding may not be present.
2. Page 7, last sentence of Methods: How was the subset of patients chosen for chart review? Randomly? Please include.
3. Page 10-11 and Table 3: Recommend including the statistics to demonstrate that there was no significant difference between self-reported and chart review.
4. Page 11, first paragraph, last two sentences: You report that patients had negative responses to "overall respiratory health," but there was improvement in the FEV1 and FVC. Not only are these two statements conflicting, but they also contradict the previous sentence. Please clarify and revise.

Minor Comments:

1. Page 3, third paragraph, first sentence: The sentence structure here is a bit confusing. Would recommend changing to "the number of patients who required respiratory-related hospitalizations decreased from..."
2. Page 7, Phone surveys: During surveys, patients were asked how many hospitalizations for respiratory causes occurred. Did investigators inquire about the number of ED/urgent care visits? If so, adding this data would also likely support the use of HFCWO therapy and make the argument for use stronger.
3. Page 9, third paragraph: Recommend defining who you refer to as "frequent exacerbators" and how this was determined. By number of hospitalizations? By number of antibiotic courses?
4. Page 11-12, Discussion: Was there any data collected on counterbalances? Time spent doing HFCWO therapy? Cost of vest? If so, please include.