Reviewer 1 v.1

Comments to the Author

Comments to work on:

- In the introduction section, please explain and emphasize the importance and the novelty of the study.

- in the methods section, please provide more details about:

How did you Identify the RTIs in the medical records?

How did you define improvement in the RTIs?

Please explain that improvement in the RTI is the intended outcome of interest, since many outcomes are related to RTIs.

In the regression models (both simple and multiple), please indicate weather you are investigating predictors of improvement or predictors of Unimproved RTIs, this is not clear and a bit confusing in interpreting the results. Also regarding the independent variables, I would prefer to use the null groups as the reference groups; for example: using non-alcoholics group as the reference group rather than alcoholics....this seems to be more appealing in presenting the results.

Finally, COPD is a chronic respiratory disease, however in the current study, you have considered COPD as a type of RTIs; please consider this issue.