Editors: comments:   
  
After accepting your letter, I will give authors of Lutz et al paper opportunity to respond to this letter. This is a standard approach taken by most of the journals in such situations. Your letter and their response will be published in the same journal. Thanks.

**Many thanks for considering this letter. We understand that Lutz et al may respond. Would it be permissible to view their response ahead of publication?**

Reviewers' Comments   
  
Reviewer: 1   
  
Comments to Author   
I commend the author on taking the time to raise these important points.

**Thank you for taking the time to review this paper.**

Reviewer: 2   
  
Comments to Author   
The authors comment on the paper by Lutz et al that draws attention to potential problems with Steiger's test for inferring the direction of causal effect in Mendelian randomisation.

**Thank you for taking the time to review this paper.**

Firstly they emphasise that unmeasured confounding should always be considered an issue, in contrast to Lutz et al's "incorrect blanket claim" that it is not an issue.  Although I agree with the authors, I think they are a little harsh on Lutz et al, as their introduction does list unmeasured confounding as a problem, and the discussion refers to a loss of power but fails to recognise the possible increase in  type-1 error under some scenarios.  I'd suggest some minor edits to roll back on "blanket claim" and give the specific location of the supporting theory, eg text S3 in Hemani et al 2017.

**Agreed. We have moved this section to the end and amended the text to be directly in line with the claims made in Lutz et al 2021.**  
Secondly the authors note that the implausible inference of lung function causing smoking status can be explained by selection bias (case/control studies of COPD, selection of ever-smokers) as well as pleiotropy, and this is the more likely explanation since the results become plausible when repeating the analysis in the less-ascertained UK Biobank.  This is a very nice resolution.