Author’s response to reviews

Title: Variables with time-varying effects and the Cox model: Some statistical concepts illustrated with a prognostic factor study in breast cancer

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
February 20, 2010

RE: Manuscript MS: 7034419723207197

Dear Editor,

We are delighted that you have found interest in our manuscript

Variables with time-varying effects and the Cox model: Illustration with a prognostic factor study in cancer.

and that you anticipate acceptance of our revised manuscript. Following your instructions, we have now revised the format of our manuscript which should now conform to the Journal style. Given the specific format of our manuscript, note however that we provide a single section called ‘Methods and Results’ (instead of two distinct sections). In a previous email, we discussed this issue with Ms Iratxe Puebla who accepted this slight adaptation. For your information, we have included this email next page.

Yours sincerely,

Carine A. Bellera, PhD (Corresponding author)  
Gaëtan MacGrogan, MD  
Marc Debled, MD  
Christine Tunon de Lara, MD  
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Dear Dr Bellera,

Thank you for your message. The reason for my request was that, if the manuscript is accepted, it will be useful both for the production process but also for searching purposes to include specific headings in line with the standard requirements of the journal. This is because these headings are then used to provide links to specific parts of the manuscript for the readers.

In this case I appreciate that you indicate the current format means Methods and Results are linked. May I suggest that, at this stage, you include a heading named 'Methods and Results' on page 4, before 'Survival analysis', and keep the remaining of the format as it is.

If the manuscript is eventually accepted, I will consult with our production team and see if they can exceptionally allow this format.

[...]

Iratxe Puebla, Senior Editor

-----Original Message-----

From: Bellera Carine [mailto:Bellera@bergonie.org]
Sent: 16 December 2009 12:59
To: BMC Editorial

Dear Editor,

[...]

In your notification email below, you wrote:
'...We appreciate that due to the nature of the work you have not followed our standard structure, however, we would urge you to provide some general headings such as Methods and Results in order to guide the reader to the specific aspects covered in each section.'

As you realized, our manuscript has a particular structure: we present a series of statistical methods, each followed by its own example (5 examples). The manuscript can be viewed as a succession of 5 Methods and 5 Results sections.

Thus, we were not sure how to address your comment, and we suggest two options:
- Option 1: we leave the structure of the manuscript as it is.
- Option 2: we rewrite the manuscript entirely: We would move all the examples to the end (before the discussion) and rename the section 'RESULTS'.

However, since:
1) The reviewers were asked to provide their expertise on a manuscript that has a different structure than a revised manuscript that would adhere to option 2,
2) your remark seems to indicate that you only request us to provide 'new' headings, without any change to the general structure,

We were not sure exactly how you would like us to proceed! Would you mind just clarifying this issue: Which option do you think might be best for your journal? Option 1 or 2?

[...]

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