Reviewer's report

Title: Population versus hospital controls for case-control studies on cancers in Chinese hospitals

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Reviewer: Logan Spector

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written paper on a topic that is well-trod elsewhere but appears to be novel in China, where the pattern of access to health care is quite different. The analysis is thus somewhat novel given the setting.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) Two principles of hospital control selection are that one should exclude conditions related to the exposure under study and include a diversity of conditions in order to minimize any bias should one's assumptions about the exposure/control condition relationship fail. The results of this study seem to suggest that the lack of exclusions did not affect validity of the hospital control group, but the authors should address whether they considered exclusions and if not why not. Secondly, it would be useful to know what the distribution of control conditions was.

Minor Essential Revisions/Discretionary Revisions: None.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests