Reviewer's report

Title: Selecting a comparison group for 5-year oral and pharyngeal cancer survivors: Two Methods

Version: 1 Date: 22 October 2011

Reviewer: Andrew F Olshan

Reviewer's report:

General

The examination of the survivorship experience of cancer survivors is of critical importance. In this area the need for valid internal (within a survivor cohort) and external comparisons is critical. This issue has not been examined in detail and this manuscript offers some insight through an evaluation of feasibility issues. The larger issue of validity was not directly examined or discussed limiting the utility of the present report.

Specific Comments

Page 5: how were survivors chosen, randomly or by other means?

Page 11: The authors should address the potential for selection bias give the low response proportions.

Page 11: The authors earlier note the importance of comorbid conditions, but their survey didn't include these items.

Page 12: It should be noted that allow matching permits better statistical control of potential confounding bias, that it can come at a cost compared to just adjustment.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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'