Author's response to reviews

Title: Retrivability in The Danish National Hospital Registry of HIV and hepatitis B and C coinfection diagnoses of patients managed in HIV centers 1995-2004.

Authors:

Niels Obel (niels.obel@rh.regionh.dk)
Hanne Reinholdt (hre@sst.dk)
Lars H. Omland (omland@dadlnet.dk)
Frederik Engsig (fren74@gmail.com)
Henrik Toft Soerensen (hts@dce.au.dk)
Ann-Brit E. Hansen (ann-brit.eg.hansen@rh.regionh.dk)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
To the Editor in Chief, BMC Medical Research Methodology.

Thank you for having reviewed our paper: “Completeness of Registration of HIV and Hepatitis B and C Coinfection in The Danish National Hospital Registry, 1995-2004”, which presents findings from the Danish HIV Cohort Study.

This is the second revised edition of the paper. The referees have raised very few questions. Below we have answered the questions raised by the reviewers. Further a revised manuscript is forwarded. We hope that our answers are sufficient to have the paper published in your journal.

Sincerely

The authors

Referee 1:
Morten Frisch

The referee suggests that we ask the Danish authorities for further data. We have discussed this in the former letter. The present paper looks at the effectiveness, by which HIV patients treated in Danish HIV centers are registered in DNHR. The Danish HIV Cohort Study is a cohort of all patients diagnosed with HIV and treated in Danish HIV centers. We have looked at how effectively these patients a registered in DNHR, not how effectively HIV patients are registered in Denmark.

The question raised by Morten Frisch is: how are all Danish HIV patients registered in DNHR. This question cannot be answered by our study. Not only because of lack of information on all patients registered with HIV in DNHR. But also because, we (The Danish HIV Cohort Study) only include patients seen in hospitals treating HIV – and therefore it does not make sense to compare these two groups.

However, as suggested by Morten Frisch, we have changed the title of the paper to: Retrivability in The Danish National Hospital Registry of HIV and hepatitis B and C coinfection diagnoses of patients managed in HIV centers 1995-2004.
Referee 2:
David B. Preen

The referee has no further questions.

Referee 3:
David B. Preen

The referee only has on minor question:

“However, I found one sentence that needs clarification. The last sentence of the first paragraph on Page 9 states that “For patients registered with HIV in DNHR before the diagnosis was registered in DHCS, the date of DHCS registration was considered the diagnosis date”. I am not sure how patients can be registered in DNHR before diagnosis with DHCS. If this happens, then what would be the “time-to-event” for this patients and how their status (the status variable is either 0 or 1) with registration with DNHR is assessed (how the “event” is defined).”

Answer:
When comparing registries, there will always be differences between the datasets. It is well known, that some Danish HIV patients are diagnosed elsewhere in the hospital system before they are seen in HIV treating centers. But some of the patients do not report that, when they are referred to an HIV center. In our study 1.2% were registered in DNHR before they were registered in DHCS. For technically reasons, we cannot include negative time in time to event analysis. So for these few patients they were handled as if they were registered in DNHR and DHCS at the same date (the date they were registered in DHCS). This means that time was defined a 0 and the event defined as “1”. Further we have changed the sentence to:

In a few cases the patient was registered with HIV in DNHR before the diagnosis was registered in DHCS, which would give negative time in time to event analysis. In these cases for technically reasons time from registration in DHCS to registration in DNHR was defined to zero.