Reviewer’s report

Title: Esophagus cancer and diabetes mellitus: A population-based case-control study in Taiwan

Version: 1 Date: 23 August 2012

Reviewer: PJ Brooks

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When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   No, because they do not have information on the type of esophageal cancer. While the reference showing that over 90% of esophageal cancer in Taiwan is squamous cell carcinoma is important and relevant, a major finding from the paper is that the relationship between DM and esophageal cancer was not seen in this study because most of the cancers here are squamous cell. To make such a claim, the lack of direct information about cancer type in these subjects is to me a major flaw.

   The major positive finding reported here is the relationship between alcoholism and esophageal cancer, however this already known, and established. While the odds ratio between alcoholism and esophageal cancer reported in this work is quite high, to meaningfully interpret this finding, it would be important to have information about ALDH2 genotype and smoking in these individuals, neither of which is available in this work. Unfortunately, I don’t think that either of these major issues can be fixed given the available data set.

2. Are the methods appropriate
   NO, see above
   and well described YES?

3. Are the data sound?
   YES

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   In my view, the lack of definitive information about the type of esophageal cancer, and the lack of ALDH2 genotype information are serious flaws in this work.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Most of the relevant points are addressed, but because of the language barrier
the discussion is hard to follow and seems disorganized.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes, though the language barrier detracts from this point.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

The authors seem unaware that the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has officially designated both alcohol and acetaldehyde as carcinogenic to humans. The reference on this point are missing, and the references about alcohol and cancer that are included are outdated.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
No

9. Is the writing acceptable?
I think there is still a need for editing for use of English to improve the clarity of the writing.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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