Author's response to reviews

Title: Herpes Zoster surveillance using electronic databases in the Valencian Community, Spain.

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Title: Herpes Zoster surveillance using electronic databases in the Valencian Community, Spain.

Dear editors,

Many thanks, again, for the effort of the Editorial Team and specially the reviewer who did a great job and as a result our paper has greatly improved.

We took into consideration each of the revisions suggested by the reviewer.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. It is generally erroneous to use overlapping confidence intervals to determine if two populations are statistically significant different. When CIs do not overlap, they are statistically significantly different; however, when they do overlap they may or may not be significantly different. Either consult a statistician about how to properly compare incidence rate estimates or remove this explanation of your comparison method in the Methods section and the last paragraph of the Results.

We changed to the following sentences. In the METHODS section:

Our data from 2007 were graphed together with the results obtained in a regional prospective cohort study in patients aged > 14 years and carried out in 25 primary care settings in the Valencian Community during the same year [35, 36].

The Risk Ratio was calculated to assess differences between males and females.

In the RESULTS section:

HZ was less common among men [3.86/1000 PY (95%CI: 3.82-3.90)] than women [5.32/1000PY (95%CI: 5.28-5.37)] in the total population, with a RR 0.73 (95CI: 0.72-0.74)(Table 1).

Figure 2 depicts the age incidence in this study and in the prospective study [35]. In both studies the annual incidence was higher in females.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. 2nd to last sentence of the 5th paragraph of the Background: “…and is expected to be widely used in Spain over the next years.” Should there be a number between the words next and years? Or perhaps you don’t have an exact figure but could use the phrase, “next few years”.

Done

2. In the 1st sentence of the 1st paragraph of “HZ Incidence” in the Epidemiological analysis subsection of the Results, the abbreviation for the phrase person-year was defined in the Background so you do not need to redefine it here.
Done

3. Last sentence of the 1st paragraph of the Discussion: “per 1000” has been omitted after the incidence rates of males and females. Perhaps you can phrase as “3.86 and 5.32 per 1000 PY in males and females, respectively.”
Done

4. 3rd sentence of the 7th paragraph of the Discussion: I believe you intended to have a period instead of a semicolon after reference #47.
Thanks for the comment.

5. Last sentence of the Conclusions: The databases are a good tool for estimating incidence, not for the disease itself. Therefore, I suggest inserting “estimating the incidence of” between “tool for” and “HZ disease”.
Thanks.

6. Figure 2 title: IC 95% should be 95% CI.
Done

Discretionary Revisions
1. I suggest moving the sentence comparing incidence rates in women and men in “HZ incidence” in the Epidemiological analysis subsection of the Results up to the end of the first paragraph (“HZ was more common among women…”). It appears out of place after the paragraph comparing incidence rates by age.
We did not move the sentence. It is now a different paragraph as otherwise we should change the tables.

2. 3rd sentence of the 3rd paragraph of the Discussion: “after a plain text is written” is an awkward phrase. “after a written explanation” would be more readable.
Done

3. Last sentence of the 7th paragraph of the Discussion: “…different health systems may also vary incidence rates…” is written poorly. I believe the authors intend to say, “…some of these studies included emergency room visits and some countries use ICD-9-CM cod
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