Author's response to reviews

Title: Association of smoking with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis risk and survival in men and women: a prospective study

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Response to the reviewers

We appreciate the comments from the reviewers. Below, we address their suggestions one by one. Changes to the manuscript have been marked using underlined bold text.

Reviewer 1

“5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Generally. A somewhat more detailed discussion of the correlation with female smokers would be helpful. Also, the authors might consider at least a mention of the studies on Parkinson’s disease which appear to show neuroprotection.”

The discussion of the revised manuscript includes a brief mention of other evidence supporting a different association of smoking and health outcomes by gender. Additionally, in the second paragraph of the discussion we note that smoking is associated with lower risk of Parkinson’s disease and a higher risk of dementia.

“8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
No. It would be more informative to note that there is an association in females.”

To address this comment, we have changed the title of the manuscript to: “Association of smoking with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis risk and survival in men and women: a prospective study”. We believe that the abstract provides enough information characterizing the relationship of smoking and ALS by gender.

Reviewer 2

“1. In Table 1, the time (in relation to index date) at which age and BMI were measured should be identified.”

Age in table 1 refers to age at index date, while BMI refers to the first recording of BMI in the GPRD. We have clarified these issues in table 1.