Author’s response to reviews

Title: Association between multiple sclerosis and epilepsy: large population-based record-linkage studies

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Version: 3 Date: 28 August 2013

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Dear Editor,

We should be grateful if you would consider the enclosed manuscript for publication in BMC Neurology.

In this work we investigated the association between multiple sclerosis and epilepsy using two large English datasets of routine medical record abstracts. Similar methodology was used by our team to study the coexistence of schizophrenia and epilepsy (Wotton, Goldacre 2012), which attracted attention in Nature Review Neurology (Mula 2012).

There is a small literature on the association between MS and epilepsy that, in our view, is not yet wholly convincing. Our findings of increased risk of epilepsy in patients with multiple sclerosis, in our two very large datasets, confirm the findings in the small-scale clinical studies. Additionally, we investigated the reverse association, the risk of multiple sclerosis following a hospital admission for epilepsy.

Our study suggests that the link between MS and epilepsy might be bidirectional, and we discuss this. We also discuss possible clinical and research implications of the findings.
