Reviewer's report

Title: Tumor location and patient characteristics of colon and rectal adenocarcinomas associating survival with TNM classes

Version: 2 Date: 14 October 2010

Reviewer: Owen Franklin Dent

Reviewer's report:

The revisions to this paper have clarified several matters but my original opening comment still applies – the study is poorly conceptualized, poorly prepared and poorly written and the findings are not novel. The authors have attempted to deal with several of the points raised in my original review but have ignored several others. For example, in the introduction there is still no clear, explicit statement of the aim of the study in terms of what outcome variables it sought to examine in relation to what background or predictor variables and why. The paragraph at the top of page 4 is not an adequate statement of aims. The methods and results sections remain poorly organized and are contradictory in places.

Three other major problems have become apparent in the revision. First, the data covered all registered colorectal cancers in the given period and presumably included patients who were not treated as well as those who were and no account has been taken of the effects of treatment on survival. Second, TNM stage was assessed clinically only (with no data on the basis of this assessment), which is likely to have been inadequate for a fair proportion of patients who had a resection. Third, the assessment of a family history of CRC was based only on diagnoses in the period 2004 to 2008 (end para. 1, p. 7), which is totally inadequate. These three are severe limitations which render the study unpublishable because of scientific inadequacy.

On a technical point, the second sentence on page 6 suggests that the method of relative survival may have been used for survival analyses but this is not specified in the methods section and does not appear to be consistent with the results in table 1. If relative survival was not used then the second sentence on page 6 is incorrect.

Finally, my original comments regarding the discussion still apply. The discussion is confused and confusing as it tries to grapple with too many issues at once without developing a clear progression of ideas.

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.