Reviewer's report

Title: Rapidly increasing renal cell cancer among black Americans: an epidemiologic review

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Reviewer: Paul A Godley

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This is a review of risk factors for renal cell carcinoma with particular attention paid to risk disparities in exposures to risk factors that would explain the increased incidence of renal cell carcinoma among African Americans. The review of RCC risk factors is competent. Unfortunately, few studies have investigated RCC risk factors by race, which weakens the rationale for the article.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

(1) The authors refer to the increased incidence among African Americans and the equivalent mortality between African Americans and Caucasians as "paradoxical." I do not think that these two trends qualify as a paradox, even considering lower rates of nephrectomy among African Americans; the authors should use less dramatic language that better describes the incidence and mortality differences seen between the races in RCC.

(2) The authors state, "This excess is unexpected since early stage renal cell cancer is primarily detected incidentally by imaging modalities which are generally thought to be utilized less frequently by blacks than whites." This statement could use a reference, but more importantly, this hypothesis could use some investigation. The authors suggest that increased abdominal imaging may account for the observed pattern of increased incidence but unchanged mortality among African Americans. Abdominal imaging by race would certainly be helpful in assessing the prevalence of incidental diagnoses of RCC. If that is unavailable, then an evaluation of the prevalence of abdominal conditions by race that may lead to abdominal imaging may be helpful. In a manuscript focused on racial differences in incidence rates of RCC, a review of abdominal imaging by race is probably as important as a review of RCC risk factors by race, particularly if localized cancers make up the bulk of the excess cancers among African Americans.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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