Reviewer’s report

Title: Income Level and Regional Policies, Underlying Factors Associated With Unwarranted Variations in Conservative Breast Cancer Surgery in Spain

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Reviewer: Yoshiharu Fukuda

Reviewer’s report:

This study examined geographic variations in medical practice of breast cancer and its related factors in Spain. As a result, there was critical variation in medical practice, especially conservative operation, characteristics such as income and educational levels were related to the variation. This study and its results are important in the view points of health inequality. And the manuscript is well written. The following comments are for improvement of the manuscript.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The results of alternative explanatory factors were described only in the text. Tables and/or figures could be help readers to understand the results better. And the summary statistics of income level, educational level, and the alternative factors should be described.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. P1, lines 1-2: Where? In Spain?
2. The authors mentioned that the variation among AC was mainly related to regional policy including cancer screening. However, the variation among AC possibly depends on various factors. If the screening is critical, screening participation rate could be used.
3. “( )” and “[ ]” were inconsistently used.

Discretionary Revisions
1. P2, instruction level: I prefer such as “educational level” than “instruction level”.
2. Brief explanation of RV, SCV, and EB are helpful for reader to understand the results.
3. P7-9: Sub-sub headings, e.g., “Do differences in tumors size explain the differences in rates?” and “Design Type”, could be omitted. But, when the headings are omitted, some revision of the texts is needed to understand the contents.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.