Reviewer’s report

Title: Second primary cancer risk: results from a retrospective population-based cancer registry study.

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2014

Reviewer: lifang liu

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Comments:

General: Although this study is not novel, I agree that it is important to investigate risk for second primary cancers on a nation-basis given the fact that cancer risk in general population may differ. Authors are very thoughtful to show the impact of applying different coding rules on risk for second cancers.

However several things needed to be revisited,

1. The aim of the study: if the implication of the study is to guide post-diagnosis surveillance, authors should consider also present absolute risks (AER) rather than an age standardized rate for incidence and preferably by site of top cancers.

2. In this study, every patient is followed for a period of 5 years and 5% of patients had a second cancer. I am wondering why this proportion is so high given for the 'short' follow-up period. In one Dutch study where the longest follow-up time is 18 years, the percentage of patients who had a second cancer is 6%. Would you please give some explanations?

3. Authors stated that the observed smaller SIRs are due to greater screening effect in the general population. Would you please justify this statement by literature/figures

- Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

Level of interest

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- An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English

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As we do not charge for access to published research, we cannot undertake the costs of editing. If the language is a serious impediment to understanding, you should choose the first option below, and we will ask the authors to seek help. If the language is generally acceptable but has specific problems, some or all of which you have noted, choose the second option.

- 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' below.

What next?

Based on your assessment of the validity of the manuscript, what do you advise should be the next step?

- Accept after minor essential revisions (which the authors can be trusted to make)