Reviewer’s report

Title: The impact of a cancer diagnosis on weight change: findings from prospective, population-based cohorts in the UK and the US

Version: 3  Date: 3 October 2014

Reviewer: Eiliv Lund

Reviewer’s report:

The paper deals with an interesting topic that so far is not extensively explored.

Major compulsory revisions
1. The Authors should report on the validation of the cancer diagnosis. From the manuscript they look as self-reported without any confirmation. Most other studies using self-reported cancer diagnosis have a subsequent validation through writing to the patients and obtaining hospital reports. Misclassification of outcome is more severe than exposure misclassification. If the outcome variable cancer is not validated the Authors should carefully consider the public interest of the analyses since there are so many cohort studies with validated cancer information.

2. Another major issue is the use of cancer NOS. Do the authors think that different sites and degrees of disease like metastasis is the same for all subgroups?

3. Looking at figure 2 and 3 the impression is that there are very small, but significant differences in the obese group. Is it reasonable to put any weight in the interpretation on such small differences partly due to a relatively large study and the use of BMI as continuous variable.

Minor revisions.
4. Most epidemiological studies on cancer have sex-specific analyses, not only sex adjustment. A gender stratified analysis should be shown With a test for heterogeneity.

5. Argue more clearly why the data was not pooled.

Discretionary revisions.
6. The BMI cutoff point for obese etc should be given.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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.