Author's response to reviews


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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editors,

We thank the reviewers for the comments that they made concerning our manuscript entitled *Incidence of leukemias in children from El Salvador and Mexico City between 1996 and 2000: Population-based data*. We took these comments into account and we think incorporating them into the manuscript has enriched our work. Below we answer, in the order in which they appeared, the questions raised or suggestions made by the reviewers.

With respect to the comments of Dr. Stiller, the modifications are the following:

In the Methods section, it is now stated that the children in the study who were used to calculate the incidence rates in Mexico City were Mexican nationals. In addition, reference is made as to how we corroborated that only those children who were residents of Mexico City were included in the study.

With respect to the population used to calculate the rates (denominators), the reason why the denominators for Mexico City change is now explained in the text. This change is due to the fact that the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS) offers medical attention only to workers who are under contract to a company. When a worker is so employed, he (she) has the right to register his (her) children with IMSS: This value is used for the denominator. When a worker loses his (her) job, the children of the worker are no longer covered by IMSS and, therefore, are no longer counted in the denominator. This information is also added to the Discussion.

In the paragraph, Analysis, the mention of the AAIR for El Salvador has been removed and, instead, the reason why this value cannot be calculated is explained. (In El Salvador, the fourth age group contained children from 0-11 years; therefore, without data from children aged 0-14 years, AAIR could not be calculated.) Thus, the term, AAIR, was eliminated from the Abstract, Results, and Discussion and, now, only the incidence rates calculated for...
El Salvador are mentioned. Only the average rate calculated for those under 12 years of age is mentioned.

It was suggested that, in the Discussion, we compare the rates for Mexico City with those of other Hispanic populations. This information is in Table 3 and is mentioned in the Discussion. The references recommended by the reviewer are now included.

As to the discretionary revisions, in the Discussion we now point out that we did not present an immunophenotype analysis because we did not have this information for all the patients. Data on the relative frequency of AML M3 is in Table 4 and is mentioned in the Discussion.

In addition, we made corrections to the language.

With respect to the comments of Dr. McNally, the modifications are the following:

In the Abstract, we made modifications to Background and described more precisely the ages of the children in both countries.

In the Abstract, in the Methods section, we specified the age strata into which the children were grouped. We changed the terminology from "hospital prospective survey" to "population-based data". We clarified the coverage of the hospitals included in the study and also stated that all rates were calculated "per million children".

In the Results section of the Abstract, we again state that the rates were calculated "per million children".

In the Conclusions section of the Abstract, we eliminated the phrase that could not be corroborated with this study.
The Background paragraph was rewritten as was asked and mention is made of the variables that influence the differences that exist in the incidence rates among populations of the world.

Throughout the document, the word "restraints" has been changed to "constraints". Also, it has been made clear that our work is population based.

As was suggested, the phrase concerning the inability to compare incidence rates between Mexico and El Salvador was moved from under Analysis in the Methods section to the Discussion.

In the Discussion, it is made clear that the rates were calculated "per million children".

As per Comment No. 10, the peak in age for ALL in children residing in Mexico City and in El Salvador was added to the Results and is mentioned in the Discussion.

Corrections in the language were also made.

We truly think that the comments made by Drs. Stiller and McNally have helped us to improve greatly our manuscript.

We hope that we can count on your support for the publication of this work because we think that it will be of vital importance in the planning of the Health Services that deal with the medical attention of children with cancer in Latin America. We think that publication of this work would act as an impetus to strengthen this combined effort of different Latin American countries to improve our registries of childhood cancer.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

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