Reviewer's report

Title: Prognosis of screen-detected breast cancers: results of a population based study

Version: 2 Date: 15 August 2005

Reviewer: Andrew Spillane

Reviewer's report:

General
The authors make careful use of wording to not overcall the significance of the results. Obviously, the comparison of screen detected vs non-screen detected in a non-randomised population is not a valid comparison to reach more major conclusions. Mostly this is a confirmation that the screening program is on track and quality assurance endpoints are being met. The acceptance rate of 65.9% is excellent in such a short time period.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Define SMP in abstract.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
I don't think it is necessary to place so much emphasis on the likelihood that 5 year overall survival and event free survival is reflective of decreased mortality rate in the screen population in the abstract. It should perhaps be more emphasised that participation in the screening program has the demonstrated benefits if quality assurance parameters are met. The RCTs show the survival benefit across the population. It is up to the authors how they focus the message but I think it would be more meaningful with this subtle change.

Use of different chemotherapy regimens as a marker of effectiveness of a screening program is drawing a long bow and I think the paper would be better without that specific detail.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'