Author's response to reviews

Title: Population attributable risk of breast cancer in white women associated with immediately modifiable risk factors

Authors:

Christina A Clarke (tina@nccc.org)
David M Purdie (davidpurdie@fastmail.fm)
Sally L Glaser (sglaser@nccc.org)

Version: 4 Date: 21 June 2006

Author's response to reviews:

June 20, 2006

Editors
BMC Cancer
BioMed Central
Middlesex House
32-42 Cleveland Street
London
W1T 4LB
United Kingdom

RE: MS: 2140686183102484 - Population attributable risk of breast cancer in white women associated with immediately modifiable risk factors

Dear Editors,

Thank you very much for accepting our manuscript contingent on addressing the comments raised by the reviewers. We have made all requested minor essential and discretionary revisions (no major compulsory revisions where requested). In addition we have made editorial changes as requested by email. These changes are incorporated into the attached revised version of the manuscript and figures, and are discussed in detail in the responses to the reviewer's comments attached to this letter; we hope that you find them satisfactory.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to publish our work in your esteemed journal.

Best regards,

Christina A. Clarke, Ph.D
Research Scientist
Northern California Cancer Center
2201 Walnut Avenue, Suite 300
Fremont, California 94538
phone: 510.608.5044
fax: 510.608.5085
email: tina@nccc.org
Reviewer's report comment: "it is not just the total use of HRT in the population that increases the potential burden of disease but it is also the duration of its use".

Authors’ response: We agree with Dr. Boyage that we haven't emphasized enough this aspect of EPRT use and how it might affect breast cancer attributable risk. Since the CHIS does not collect information about duration of use, we mention this deficit as a weakness of the paper. We added some language to page 13, paragraph 4 such that it now reads:

"...for example, breast cancer risk increases with duration of EPRT use and declines after EPRT cessation [21], effects we could not capture."

Minor essential revision: The figure labeling should be improved. 2+ better to use two or more or 2 or more. Figure 1 legend states EPRT whereas x-axis label states HRT and the paper uses EPRT. Perhaps use EPRT but spell out what it stands for as figures and tables need to stand alone for quick interpretation.

Author’s response: We have changed the figure labels to address the reviewers concerns. We changed the x-axis label for Figure 2 from "2+" to "2 or more"; the x-axis label for Figure 1 from "HRT" to "EPRT" and provided in the figure legend of Figure 2 a definition of "EPRT".

Discretionary revisions: I am unclear what "lifetime breastfeeding for 31 months" means P12 start of 2nd paragraph. That is, is it better to refer to as "breastfeeding for 31 months".

Author’s response: In accordance with Dr. Boyage's recommendation, we have deleted the word "lifetime" such that the sentence on page 12 now reads "...breastfeeding for 31 months".

Editorial requests:
Country- Please include the country at the end of the affiliations. Please write USA instead of U.S.A.

Response: "USA" has been added to the affiliations on the cover page.

Introduction- Please rename this section Background.

Response: The introduction section has been renamed "Background".

Materials and Methods- Please rename this section Methods.

Response: We have renamed this section "Methods".

References- Please list all of the authors in the reference list and avoid the use of the suffix et al.

Response: The references have been reformatted to include all authors in a given reference.