Reviewer’s report

Title: The incidence and risk of developing a second primary esophageal cancer in patients with oral and pharyngeal carcinoma: a population-based study in Taiwan over a 25 year period

Version: 2 Date: 20 July 2009

Reviewer: Ghislaine Scélo

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

None.

Minor essential revisions

1. The introduction does not clearly state the research question. Moreover, references are often old and the literature review is very incomplete. For example, previous similar studies include the one published by Chuang et al. (2008), which is multicentric and based on decent sample size.

2. From the method section, it seems that synchronous cancers were not analyzed (p. 5, 2nd paragraph) but then authors mention them in the result and discussion parts. Please clarify.

3. Age ranges are unlikely to be correct (p. 7, 1st paragraph). Numbers might be Q1-Q3?

4. The significant decreased risk of stomach cancer has been de-emphasized by the authors: “suggesting that it occurred less frequently than expected” (p. 8) is quite a weak phrase, and there is no mention of that result in the discussion section.

5. The sentence “Because the 5-year survival rate was only 28% […] may in fact far exceed the number we obtained” (p. 11) is obscure.

6. Higher SIRs in the first year of follow-up should be discussed: the results might be due to over-diagnosis (surveillance), or misclassification (same tumor that spread out). In general, limitations of the study are lacking in the discussion section.

Discretionary revisions

6. Numbers are small in some of the analyses stratified by follow-up duration and age. Authors might want to concatenate some categories.

7. Beginning of page 13 should be reworded to make it clearer.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.