Author’s response to reviews


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Version: 2 Date: 18 November 2010

Author’s response to reviews:

Response to reviewer 1

Reviewer’s report
Version: 1 Date: 10 May 2010
Reviewer: C Bosetti

Reviewer’s report:
This is an interesting study on lung cancer mortality trends in South Africa in the last decade.

Thank you.

There are a few points which need to be addressed in order to make the manuscript suitable for publication.

The points you raised have been addressed and have indeed improved the quality of the paper. We appreciate the sound review.

Abstract
Delete the second sentence “the global burden...developing countries”
This has been done
Delete the last sentence of the Methods “This was done... by gender”
This has been done

In the results, provide the number of deaths for the most recent year, for all the population and separately by gender. Specify that the decline was between 1995 and 2006.
This has been done
Background
Delete the second sentence “the who....next 20 years”.

We do feel that this sentence is relevant to the background, so the statement has not been deleted

The second paragraph can be shortened. In particular, the sentence “occupational related cancers.... globally in 2005” can be deleted.

The sentence has been deleted and the paragraph has been shortened.

When discussing the trends in other areas of the world provide also a reference for Europe overall.

We have included literature for Europe and other parts of the world. Thank you.

Methods
Provide a reference for the source of data (StatsSA).
This data is unpublished – raw mortality data (in Microsoft Excel) collected from Statistics South Africa.

Delete the details of the model used.

This has been deleted.

Results
Provide number of deaths for the most recent year only.
This has been done. We agree that this is more useful.

Delete the sentence “However, surges in lung cancer.....”

This has been deleted.

Provide results of the regression analysis also for the years 2001-2006.
This has been done. To be better characterise the emerging trends in both groups, partitioned analysis were also carried out for different time periods.

Discussion
Provide data also for the entire Europe.
We have included data for Europe and other parts of the world. Thank you.

References
Provide title and volume number for references 6 and 7.

This has been done. We also removed one of the IARC references and included a systematic review
Table 1
Provide the numbers of deaths for the most recent year only.
This has been done

Table 2
Delete the 95% confidence intervals, and provide the numbers of deaths for each year.
This has been done

Table 3
Provide the results of the regression analysis also for the period 2001-2006.
In the Table 1.
This has been done (Table 3).

Response to reviewer 2
Reviewer's report
Version: 1 Date: 13 July 2010
Reviewer: NABIHA MISSAOUI
Reviewer's report:
Major Compulsory Revisions:
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declarations of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'

Thank you very much for a thorough review. We do agree that the paper needed substantial editing of language. We have done this, amongst other corrections indicated below. We believe that your comments and those of the second reviewer significantly improved the strength and readability of our paper. We do hope that you find the latest version satisfactory.

Reviewer’s report
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Major Compulsory Revisions:
This paper is interesting because it gives new data on the burden of cancer lung cancer mortality in South Africa.

Thank you. The findings may also be important to other African or middle income countries.

here are the major problems:
Abstract: the first sentence is not correct: “Cancers remains a major cause of …” should be “Cancer remains a major cause of …”

Thank you. This has been corrected.

95% confidence interval (CI) should be added when the trends are described

We provide 95% confidence intervals and p-values for the trend slope (p-values reported in the abstract). The 95% confidence interval for the age-standardized rates which we previously reported has been removed following suggestion from the other reviewer.

Figure 1 should be revised. Please make it more appropriate for publication. Legend should be clarified: what did authors mean by “ca”. You may add the title for the figure

This is has been clarified. Thanks.

Table 1, 2 and 3: Please use the same way to present data and for titles.

This has been done

Bibliography should be more enriched;
Please check the references list and please follow the journal instructions: for instance: reference 2 and 19

This has been checked.

Page 5: method section need to be more clarified: references should be added
for example for ICD 10 classification, method used, data analysis…

The methods section has been clarified and a reference added for ICD documents.

Discussion section: when authors say: “This decline, although delayed and marginal, is welcome because, if it continues, the current mortality rate of 25 deaths per 100,000 will be halved in approximately one decade”. How they can know this decline in one decade?

We believe this statement is correct. It is prediction made on assumption that of the decline of 0.81 (approximately 1) in annual mortality rate. We do not claim that the decline will continue in the next decade; hence we say that if (perhaps the word “if” is not clear) the decline continues, then in 10 years, it would have dropped by about 10 cases per 100,000. This is clearly seen in the decline from 29.5% in 2001 to 25% in 2006.

However following your comment, we have used the word 'assuming'

“Many recent studies, especially those carried out in Western countries, have reported declining trends in male mortality due to lung cancer”: need some references;

We have included more references from Europe, America and other parts of the world.

Please review all paper and add appropriate references;
Please check the use of per 100,000 males, per 100,000, per 100,000 thousand …

Thanks. This has been standardized to per 100,000 persons.

English is poor: Please try to improve it!

Thank you. We have thoroughly gone through the paper and have also used the services of an editor.

What next?
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Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest
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- An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English
Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review

It is essential that this manuscript be seen by an expert statistician but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests

I declare that I have no competing interests.