Reviewer's report

Title: Mortality Among British Columbians Testing for Hepatitis C Antibody

Version: 1 Date: 25 September 2012

Reviewer: Ashley Olson

Reviewer's report:

Amanda Yu and colleagues use a large data set from approximately 400,000 individuals who received an anti-HCV test between 1992-2004 to estimate standardized all cause and disease specific mortality ratios for four time dependent Hepatitis C serological groups in British Columbia and further describe all cause and disease specific mortality hazard ratios between serological groups. They conclude that HCV infected individuals have an increased mortality, especially for risks activities associated with HCV acquisition and chronic infection.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Page 5: It is unclear for those not familiar with the Canadian health care system what type of individuals have a personal health number. Will most individuals living in British Columbia have this? Without this information, it is impossible for the reader to understand the breadth of this study.

2. There is no mention of proportional hazards assumption in Cox proportional hazards models being meet. This must be added. If there is evidence of non proportional hazards, the analysis must be amended.

3. Page 6: What was the maximum time between two tests that was allowed for seroconverters? This should have a limit, and the distribution should be described.

4. Numbers in Table 4 and Supplementary tables do not agree.

Minor Essential Revisions

5. Page 5: Explain why individuals less than one year or older than 100 were excluded.

6. Page 5/6: It is unclear what is meant by ceasing to be registered, re-register, last registration and the censoring that is made due to this process. Is this specific to the British Columbia health system?

Discretionary Revisions.

7. Page 5: Itemize data quality exclusions. If the list is too long to fit in the paper, add to a supplementary table.

8. Page 13. When discussing the limitations of the study, the authors should
comment on how the limitations will effect the SMRs and HRs they present in the results section.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests