Reviewer's report

Title: Planning for the future: cancer incidence projections in Switzerland up to 2019

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Reviewer: Xue Qin Yu

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The authors projected the national cancer incidence in Switzerland up to 2015-2019 using NORDPRED software and historical cancer incidence data (1985-2009) from 11 cantonal cancer registries covering about 60% of the national population in 2005-2009. All cancers combined and 12 major cancers were included in the projection. The changes in projected incidence were separated into contribution from changes in cancer risk and that due to changes in population ageing and growth. The methods used seem to be appropriate and the results produced are reasonable.

However, I am not sure how useful these national projections of cancer incidence are, as authors mentioned that the Swiss health system is highly decentralised (page 11) which means that the cantonal government is responsible for the cancer control programs for their population. In this sense, canton-specific projections will be more useful for cancer control in Switzerland. In the Conclusion (on page 12) the authors stated that ‘New and more effective preventive measures should be put in place to counteract the inevitable increase in the number of cancer cases’. Whose responsibility is this? Federal government? Or Cantonal government?

Because the historical data only covered up to 60% of the national population (in 2009) and the projections are based on such data, one of the assumptions is that the cancer incidence rates in these regions without a cancer registry were similar as these regions with registry coverage in the past and would be comparable in the future. This is a relative strong assumption and it would be good that the authors provide some discussion on the uncertainty of the projections based on this.

Specific comments

1. There are some discrepancies in the reporting of the total number of new cases projected for 2015-2019: In Abstract – in one place it is 46000 (last sentence of the Results) but 45700 if you add together the total number of males (25700) and females (20000); in the Results these numbers are different again – 25910 for males and 20359 for females; in the Discussion the total number reported is 46300 (males and females combined) on page 9.

2. In Background section: in the 3rd paragraph – what is the meaning of the word “presage”?
3. In Methods section: The term NICER stand for ‘the National Institute for Epidemiology and Cancer Registration’, but it is “the National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration” according to reference 3.

4. On page 6, 4th paragraph the references for 6,7 should be fixed. [6,6,6,7]

5. Table 1: Cancer type C14 is included in both ‘Oral Cavity & Pharynx’ and ‘Other cancers’.

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

**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.