Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of thyroid nodules in an occupationally radiation exposed group: a cross sectional study in a area with mild iodine deficiency

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Bari, 10 May 2005

Dear editor,

We received the reviewer’s report, and we have provided for modifying the paper according to the referee advice. We think that were not raised substantial point and any suggestion is welcome to improve exposition of the paper.

Major Compulsory Revision.

Comments 1. The table have been modified as requested.

Comment 2. The headings of table 2 have been corrected. We strongly agree with the comment of the referee, that’s why we have used particular attention to adjust results in the analysis by Mantel-Haenszel method and by bootstrap method in the multiple comparison. In the first case the adjustment is usefulness to weight the association between risk and pathologies taking into account the sample size for each stratum. The bootstrap adjustment appear a better method to estimate multiple difference of proportion taking into account the possibility of comparison between little sample.

The study was planned with a stratified sample, in which strata were sex, age and working unit; the sample size were 986, with a ratio exposed:not exposed about 1:3. We achieved a ratio exposed:not exposed near 1:1, but even if this ratio could be acceptable, and the effective total sample size at the end of the study could be considered big enough too, the distribution for sex and age depends from people that express a free informed consensus to participate to the study.

Comment 3. The expression has been modified as recommended by the referee.

Comment 4. Discussion page 10: Taking into account the data of Leenhardt et al. JCEM 84: 24-28, 1999 we rephrased this paragraph.

“Contradictory attitudes have been proposed for the management of non palpable thyroid nodules. We agree with the suggestion of Leenhardt et colligues that a systematic FNAB performed in all nodule < 1 cm is not advisable, because only solid hypoechoic feature is a useful criterion to predict malignancy independently from the diameter of the nodule. Considering that in our cohort of patients with incidentalomas, we didn’t find these ecographic characteristics we supposed the probably benign nature of most such lesions and we decided to kept them under periodical ‘observation’, without performing the FNAB. The real meaning of the high prevalence of incidentalomas in the exposed group requires a longer observation of these subjects and an enlargement of the casistic.”

Minor Essential Revision.

It is a simple type error, that has been corrected.

Concerning English language we have revised English language by a English language lecturer before sending the paper as requested in the instruction for authors. Other corrections will be well accepted.

Best Wishes

Paolo Trerotoli