Reviewer's report

Title: Record linked retrospective cohort study of 4.6 million people exploring ethnic variations in disease: myocardial infarction in South Asians

Version: 2 Date: 24 April 2007

Reviewer: seeromanie harding

Reviewer's report:

I am happy with the revisions. I've made some additional comments which the authors may find helpful in the final editing of the paper.

RETURNING YOUR REPORT BY E-MAIL
-------------------------------
If you prefer to return your report by e-mail, please note the following guidelines and use the report template at the bottom of this message, which includes some questions for you to answer.

GUIDELINES
----------

BMC Public Health currently considers the following article types: Database, Debate, Research, Software, Study protocol and Technical advance articles. We do not currently consider review articles.

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined? Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work? Yes
3. Are the data sound and well controlled? Yes within the context of a pilot exercise
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Yes
6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
7. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
The combined paper reads well but is a little long. I am uncertain of the journal's rules re length of paper. There a few cuts that can be made in places but it is difficult to think of substantial cuts without compromising the sense of the paper.

- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Page 10:
typo in heading - 'approval'
Page 12:
There is an error in table numbers in the text. Table 1 should be Table , Table 2 should be Table 3
First Para - insert table 1 under 'Quality of overall linkage...'
Page 11:
Poisson modelling for incidence in a cohort study with access to individual level data is not conventional but allowed here given that this paper is based on a pilot study and preliminary analyses to demonstrate the potential
of the method. The authors may find it useful in the main project to derive incidence from events and person days at risk (adjusted for exits from risk) with confidence intervals (which can be done in STATA using individual level data). Hazard ratios from Cox models can then be used track survival at 30, 720 days etc after admission.

Page 13:
There are 2 confusing sentences in the first Para. Do you need 'in the/any principal position' - if so need to clarify what you mean

Page 17:
Reference statement about South Asians living near to hospitals - 2001 Census?
Use of 'White' - in the context of this study you mean 'Non-south Asians' as 'White' could include other White groups such as Italians (with possibly better survival than 'White Scottish'). Alternatively use 'White Scottish'?