Reviewer's report

Title: Early menopause: Association with tobacco smoking, coffee consumption and other lifestyle factors - a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 25 March 2007
Reviewer: María Isabel Covas

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Results are only adjusted by educational level. Authors must follow the standard procedures to present and to evaluate the results. First, in Table 1 results for each for each variable must be presented adjusted by the other variables which have been shown to be related with the end point, the early menopause in raw analyses: marital status, educational level, social participation, self reported health, or coffee consumption. Second, and concerning Tables 2, 3 and 4, authors must explore the relationship between all variables showed in Table 1 and smoking variables, coffee, and alcohol. All variables related both with early menopause (Table 1) and smoking must be included as covariates in the analyses for Tables 2 and 3. The same procedure applies for coffee and alcohol (Table 4). Why are the results for smoking and early menopause repeated in Table 4, when they are also presented in Table 2? There is a lack of data on physical activity and its relationship with early menopause. Also (Discussion, Page 13) the response rate is very low, and the representativity of the sample is highly compromised, not only "some bias is expected", and of course the selective participation could affect the data obtained. The second paragraph must be re-written in this way.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Abstract. Objectives are not clearly defined. They must be shortened for Abstract purposes.
Background. Put the quotation et al. after the name of a first author
Methods. Was the questionnaire used for recording alcohol and coffee consumption a validated questionnaire? If so, please put the citation. If no, this must be included as a limitation of the study.
Why participants were not asked for natural or surgical menopause? Privacy reasons?
Results. There is no data concerning percentage of passive smokers.
Discussion. Page 15 last paragraph. The link among education, genetics, and intrauterine life is highly speculative.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests' below