Author's response to reviews

Title: Occupation Recorded on Certificates of Death Compared with Self-Report: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study

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Title: Occupation Recorded on Certificates of Death Compared with Self-Report: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study

Dear Dr. Le,

We are pleased that you have reviewed our manuscript, Occupation Recorded on Certificates of Death Compared with Self-Report: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) Study, for publication in BMC Public Health. We thank the two reviewers, the assistant editor, and the editorial office for their constructive and helpful comments. We have incorporated the changes suggested and briefly present our responses below.

Editorial Office

We added a statement in the methods section in order to document the approval for our investigation. Informed consent was also documented.

Reviewer #1: Dr. Young-Ho Khang

Minor Essential Revisions

[1] As suggested, we provided percent agreement and kappa coefficient not only for the six occupational categories but also for the white versus blue collar occupation categories.

[2] In our discussion section, we stressed the strength represented by a high proportion (95%) of study participants with information on both death certificate and self-reported record.

[3] We modified the interpretation of the agreement to be clearly based on the
confidence intervals.

[4] As indicated, we documented in Table 1 the number of participants for each category.

Reviewer #2: Dr. Peter Byass

Major Compulsory Revisions

The reviewer is raising an interesting conceptual issue. We followed the recommendation and used also a kappa approach for the occupational categories (Table 1) as we did for the characteristics presented in Table 2.

As suggested, we estimated the inter-coder variation within the coding process (using a percent agreement) and contrasted it to the main comparison death certificate - self reported occupation. We modified the methods and the results section to incorporate this analysis, as indicated.

Minor Essential Revisions

The results and the Table 2 are now consistent; they are presenting the percent agreement, which is 67%.

Discretionary Revisions

We revised the document and made a series of language corrections.

We added to the Discussion section a comment regarding the significance and potential generalizability of our results.

In summary, we have responded to the editor's, the editorial office's, and both Reviewer #1 and Reviewer #2's comments and we hope that the article will now be acceptable for publication. If I may be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

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