Reviewer's report

Title: Changes of Hormone Replacement Therapy in Menopausal Women: An Observational Study in Taiwan

Version: 1 Date: 7 April 2006

Reviewer: Sirpa-Liisa Hovi

Reviewer's report:

General

The article is interesting in telling how hormone (HT) is used in Taiwan, and how WHI results in 2002 lowered HT prescribing. The article provided an interesting piece of information that Taiwan government openly promoted use of HT in 1999, although scientific evidence about HT preventive effects had not been proved.

The research question is whether WHI influenced in physicians' willingness to prescribe HT and women's willingness to use HT. The data make possible to study changes in physicians' prescribing practices but not necessary women's HT use. Women have bought the prescribed medication but it does not guarantee that they also take the prescribed medication.

The chosen method is appropriate and well described with details. Statistical analysis is not very clear; description of reference group is confusingly described, it should be clarified in the text. Table 3 shows clearly the reference group.

It remained unclear how women's illness was defined?

There is one major problem in reporting. The interpretation of OR is incorrect, OR shows difference but not its amount. Reporting needs revision.

Discussion and conclusion comes from the data but reporting need revision because of OR interpretation problem.

The title is not very informative. The article describes rather physicians' description practices than women's decisions about HT. Problems in reporting results reflects also in the abstract.

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

There is one major problem in reporting. The interpretation of OR is incorrect, OR shows difference but not its amount. Reporting needs revision.

Discussion and conclusion comes from the data but reporting need revision because of OR interpretation problem.

The abstract need revision, as well, after the results have been revised.

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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)
Statistical analysis is not very clear; description of reference group is confusingly described, it should be clarified in the text. Table 3 shows clearly the reference group. It remained unclear how women's illness was defined?

In data sources (p. 6 down) I think the second source should be NHI (instead of NNHI)

In tables 1 and 2 in footnotes level of significance is given but they are not given in the tables.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

I suggest that the authors consider the terminology in the manuscript. After WHI trial results hormone treatment (HT) seems to have become established instead of HRT when it concerns treatment around menopause. Alternative estrogen therapy (ET) estrogen-progestin therapy (EPT), menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) have been used. Instead, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is currently used for treatment of hormone deficiency e.g. because of premature menopause.

Few times the authors say “treatment for menopause”. This sounds peculiar; the indication usually is for menopause related symptoms, or for preventive purposes, but menopause itself do not need treatment.

The authors phrase "physicians used hormone therapy" in confusing while they are talking about HT prescribing. It is known that physicians, especially gynaecologists, themselves use HT more often than others.

Because majority of women were unemployed and without any personal income I wonder whether the authors could use family income to show women's socioeconomic situation?

Reference 9 is from the year 2002, there is also more recent publication, from the year 2005 and thic could be used here.

**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:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests