Reviewer's report

Title: The 2003 Australian Breast Health Survey: Survey Design and Preliminary Results

Version: 2 Date: 25 July 2007

Reviewer: Lee S Caplan

Reviewer's report:

General

This is an interesting and well-written manuscript which reports on an important survey.

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

I am not clear as to why the authors stratified to separate the capital city from the rest of the state.

What is a weighting class?

What does it mean that "N" denotes relevant population benchmarks?

What is meant by a "constant design effect?"

What is meant by "information and services" as one of the themes of the BHS?

I am having trouble interpreting tables 2 and 3.

In table 5, why is "69" with a percent and CI listed above the frequency distribution?

The response rate for the survey seems extremely low, with only two out of five calls resulting in a response and only one third of those with a response resulting in an interview, but there is no mention of that in the discussion.

The distinction between how symptomatic and asymptomatic women should be handled is important to be known for another seemingly more important reason which is to avoid delay in working up symptomatic women. When a woman has a suspicious physical finding, she needs to be worked up to rule out cancer. Her work up needs to include a TISSUE diagnosis through biopsy, not just a mammogram, as the mammogram is basically to make sure that the other breast is clear.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.