Reviewer's report

Title: Two different ways of investigating the importance of established risk factors and C-reactive protein in the explanation of socioeconomic differences in cardiovascular events

Version: 2 Date: 19 December 2007

Reviewer: Gordon Lowe

Reviewer's report:

1. Is question new and well-defined?

The authors report an analysis of the extent to which established risk factors explain socioeconomic differences (education level) in risk of CHD, using both relative and absolute outcome measures. In accordance with previous studies (Ref 12), they observed differences between relative and absolute educational differences. This is a useful confirmation of previous work. In addition, the association of CRP with socioeconomic differences in CHD risk is reported.

2. Methods

Generally appropriate. Add intra- and inter-assay coefficient of variation for CRP. (Minor essential revision)

3. Data.

Sound.

4. Reporting

Add data on ex-smokers to Table 1. (Minor essential revision)

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Generally reasonable. Further discussion and references are required on CRP and fibrinogen. In contrast to the statement that CRP and fibrinogen have been found to predict cardiovascular events (Reference 9), more recent reviews have clarified that the associations of CRP (Danesh et al, N Engl J Med 2004) and fibrinogen (Fibrinogen Studies Collaboration, JAMA 2005) are weaker than previously suggested, confounded by many classical risk factors, and that the utility of CRP in risk prediction beyond that of classical risk factors is minimal (Lloyd-Jones et al, Arch Intern Med 2006). The statement in Discussion that CRP shows little seasonal or diurnal variation could be modified with reference to a recent large study (Rudnicka et al, Circulation 2007). (Minor essential revisions)

6. Title and Abstract

Accurate

7. Writing
Sound

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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