Author's response to reviews

Title: Breast and Bowel Cancer Screening Uptake Patterns over Time in UK South Asian Ethnic Minority Populations Corrected for Differences in Socio-demographic Characteristics

Authors:

Ala K Szczepura (ala.szczepura@warwick.ac.uk)
Charlotte L Bean (c.l.bean@warwick.ac.uk)
Anil K Gumber (a.k.gumber@warwick.ac.uk)

Version: 2 Date: 30 June 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Natalie

We have now been able to examine the peer reviewers’ comments on our manuscript and we have addressed these as outlined in the points below:

1. As both reviewers expressed concerns regarding the length of the manuscript, this has now been more than halved. By removing repetitions and shortening specific sections, as suggested by the reviewers, the manuscript length has been reduced from 9,269 to 4,402 words. We do not consider that any further cuts are possible without damaging the reporting of our findings. Specifically in response to the detailed points made by Reviewer Fritschi listed as compulsory revisions:
   (i) the introduction and methods have been shortened considerably, concentrating on the specific topic of the paper and removing full details of each screening programme;
   (ii) the description of the study design of the paper now omits much of the detail previously given;
   (iii) the results section on the univariate analyses has been compressed;
   (iv) the section on screening outcomes has been shortened considerably;
   (v) the discussion is now less discursive and restricted to the main issues of the paper, including issues which are relevant to other jurisdictions and other programmes;
   (vi) the conclusion is now limited to one short paragraph which contains the main message of the paper.

2. In addition to tightening of the text, we have also reduced the number of References from 117 to 76 (mentioned by Reviewer Fritschi).

3. The Tables have been rationalised so that repeat information is not presented in table, text/figure format. As a result, the number of tables been reduced from twelve to three as follows:
   (i) Table 1 has been omitted (suggestion from Reviewer Fritschi);
   (ii) Table 2 has also been removed because contents are described in the text (suggestion from Reviewer Fritschi);
   (iii) Tables 3-7 have been rearranged & combined into three new tables: Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. The unadjusted odds ratios column has been removed because these trends are covered in the text describing the results of the univariate analysis (Suggestions from Reviewer Stoddart & Fritschi);
   (iv) Tables 8-10 have been removed because contents are described in the text (Suggestions from Reviewer Stoddart & Fritschi);
   (v) Tables 11 & 12 have been removed since there are no really important findings & the section on screening outcomes has been shortened (Suggestions from Reviewer Fritschi).

4. The Figures have similarly been rationalised and the number reduced from 13 to 5 as follows:
   (i) Six Figures have been removed (Figs 3, 4, 7, 11, 12 & 13) because the information is presented in a different format elsewhere (Suggestions from Reviewer Stoddart & Fritschi);
   (ii) Figures 5 & 6 have been combined into one new Figure 3 presenting breast & bowel screening uptake by age for all rounds (suggestion from Fritschi to combine presentation of results for rounds);
   (iii) Figures 8 & 9 have been combined into one new Figure 4 portraying breast screening uptake by deprivation rounds 1 & 2 and round 5 (suggestion from Fritschi);
   (iv) Figure 10 (bowel screening uptake by deprivation rounds 1 & 2) remains and has been relabelled new Figure 5.

Finally, you asked that we document, within our manuscript, the name of the ethics committee which approved our study. The project was awarded Coventry Research Ethics Committee approval (ref: 05/Q2802/2) on 27th January 2005. This information is now included at the end of the Background section.
I hope that the revised manuscript is now acceptable.

With kind regards

Ala Szczepura
30 June 2008