Reviewer’s report

Title: Possible associations between carpal tunnel syndrome and marital status: a study of in-hospital incidence rates in the general population

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Reviewer: Gary Franklin

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While the finding of association of marital status with CTS incidence in this large population-based study are of interest, it is hard to know what to make of this association. The following issues should be addressed:

Major points to address:

1. The authors state that most persons undergoing CTS surgery were hospitalized for the surgery during the study time frame; this would be a very unusual practice-how was this validated?

2. The biggest problem, of course, is that the patients not undergoing surgery were excluded, and the distribution of risk factors for this group would, of course, have been excluded as well in this study. Greater review of the literature as to demographics of surgical vs non-surgical groups would be useful here.

3. Perhaps more importantly, the hospitalized patients are likely more severely affected than those not hospitalized. Severity as a possible important co-variate in the marriage/CTS incidence association could not be explored here.

4. In the absence of decent occupational data, such as job type or employment, it is difficult to make much of the marriage association. The emphasis on homemaking does not really seem all that plausible as a key causal exposure linked to CTS.

5. Is everyone in Italy equally likely to receive needed medical services such as hospitalization regardless of demographic/employment status?

6. While there is an age peak for women at about 50 yrs, there actually may be two peaks, a second one in the elderly. Also, while the earlier peak may be look "peri-menopausal", the onset of the peak looks like it begins in the early-mid forties. So, it's not really clear that this is peri-menopausal. Again, the distribution of employment by age and sex would have been very helpful here.

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

Gary Franklin