Author's response to reviews

Title: Impacts of the Finnish service screening programme on breast cancer rates

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Version: 2 Date: 23 August 2007

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23.8.2007

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed a new version of our manuscript on the Impacts of the Finnish service screening programme on breast cancer rates. We have carefully considered the comments given the by reviewers. The following changes have been done, based on the comments:

Reviewer 1 (SW Duffy)

1. Clarifications on what was observed within age group 40-49 has been clarified on page 9, 1st paragraph, 3 last lines and on page 12, 2nd paragraph, last line.
2. We have added two Swedish cohort studies in the Introduction, and taken them into account also when concluding the available evidence (page 3, 1st para).
3. Results, first section, we have clarified how the rates were estimated (extrapolated), on page 7. We also clarified this in the title of the Table 1.
4. We added more information on what it meant by refined mortality, on page 5, 2nd paragraph, lines 1-3.

Reviewer 2 (A Barchielli)

1. We have added a brief description on ¿dynamic¿ (page 14, 2nd paragraph, first line); and defined further on what is refined mortality (see also comment 4 by referee 1 above), and giving the length of follow-up period (page 5, 2nd paragraph, lines 8-9).
2. We deleted two sentences mentioning that we had complied even more screening coverage indicators than reported in this paper. The text was thus simplified. We moved a sentence showing the final model was complied to the next paragraph. (Page 7, lines 3-5 of the first paragraph).
3. The titles of the tables 1-3 have been clarified so that they should be self-explanatory. The differences in the estimates were largely due to different comparison designs; To evaluate tentative screening effects it was essential to include information on the developments among unscreened (see the text in the last paragraph of the Materials and methods section, page 7).

4. Mortality outcomes are included, indeed, in the results and discussion in the reference number 12 of the original version of the manuscript (number 14 of the current version).

5. The title of Table 1 has been changed, see comment 3 above.

6. When estimating the tentative screening effects, we considered also simultaneous developments in unscreened groups. It is not in the scope of the current paper to evaluate further other components of the current trends than the screening programme (e.g. treatments, earlier diagnostics outside the programme, or changes in background risk by assuming different simulation conditions).

We have also prepared a manuscript version where all the changes are indicated. If required, we would like to mail that version, too.

On behalf of the authors,

Ahti Anttila