Reviewer’s report

**Title:** An Asian viewpoint on the use of vitamin D and calcium in osteoporosis treatment: Physician and patient attitudes and beliefs

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 27 February 2010

**Reviewer:** Tuan Nguyen

**Reviewer’s report:**

**General comments**

The authors report results of a survey on the viewpoints of some Asian doctors regarding osteoporosis prevention and treatment. They found a suboptimal recognition of Asian doctors on the importance of vitamin D and calcium in the prevention of osteoporosis. This is a timely study and a welcome contribution to an area of research that is topical in Asian countries. The research methodology is appropriate. The data analysis is good, with very good presentation of results. The interpretation of data is reasonable and logical. However, I think that the study could be further improved by considering some pertinent questions that I will raise below:

1. The authors have done a good job in reviewing the literature, but I still think that they can do better.

First, I am not sure whether they can state that osteoporosis is the most common disease in the world (first sentence in the Introduction). Perhaps, what we are concerned with is the lifetime risk of fracture, which has been studied by Nguyen ND et al (JBMR 2007).

Second, the authors mention the prevalence of osteoporosis in Western populations, but they do not refer to some similar studies in Asian populations. Here are some references that they may care to check out:


2. In the Methods section, the authors have not indicated whether the questionnaire has been validated in the countries that the study was undertaken. Furthermore, was the questionnaire translated to a local language? Presumably the actual interview was done by a contractor? These details should to be provided to clarify the study procedure.

3. I think it is important to know which factors were associated with physicians’ perception. Some pertinent questions are:

(a) was there any difference in perception of vitamin D and calcium among GP, OB&G doctors, geriatricians, rheumatologists, endocrinologists?

(b) was doctors’ age associated with their perception?

Those questions can be addressed by an additional analysis, e.g. log-linear or logistic regression model.

4. In the Results section, I am curious whether there was any correlation between the degree of doctors’ perception and their actual practice of prescription. Could the authors comment on this aspect?

5. It is interesting to note that the countries with a high prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency (Malaysia and Singapore) are also the countries with the lowest proportion of uptake of vitamin D supplements. Could the authors comment on this?

**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.