Author's response to reviews

Title: Rheumatoid arthritis and incident fracture in women: A case-control study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
I think that additional thought needs to be considered regarding the issue of the age difference between cases and controls. Given the difference observed, I think the unadjusted results may be misleading, and it would be better not to present them.

We have revised our manuscript to focus on the age-adjusted results.

I also am concerned that there could be residual confounding by age, given the wide age strata that were used for adjustment. Please consider using smaller age categories, or including age as a continuous variable, in adjusted models.

Our analyses were limited by sample size, and thus we were not powered to use smaller age categories. Our age categories were calculated to ensure that each age strata held an appropriate number of fractures. We have revised our limitations section accordingly to read:

Page 6, Paragraph 4, Lines 2-4 (Methods): When calculating the age-adjusted RR, the following categorical age groupings were used; 35-54 years, 55-74 years, and 75+ years, so as to ensure that each age strata held an appropriate number of fractures.

Page 10, Paragraph 1, Lines 1-3 (Discussion): Given our sample size, and the wide age stratum necessarily employed for analyses, we cannot exclude that residual confounding may influence our results.

Furthermore, we have added to our conclusion, which now reads:
Page 10, Paragraph 2, Lines 6-7 (Discussion):…however we suggest that larger studies are warranted.

I would strongly prefer presentation of the age-adjusted results throughout the paper (abstract, results, and discussion), and inclusion of the limitation of the age adjustment (i.e., the wide strata) in the discussion section.

Please refer to our responses above.