Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of Easily Measured Risk Factors in the Prediction of Osteoporotic Fractures

Version: 2 Date: 15 June 2005

Reviewer: Alison Stewart

Reviewer’s report:

General

Although in the answers to my comments you clarify the situation, I feel the manuscript requires more detailed revisions to ensure the readers are provided with all the essential information and are not mislead.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Can you please give the mean and standard deviations for the follow-up time. At the current time it is difficult to know if a Cox-Regression analysis is more appropriate. If there are large variation in follow-up time the current analysis may not be appropriate. The Cox-Regression analysis calculates a Hazard ratio but takes into account time to follow-up. Since you have not provided us with this information a decision cannot be made regarding the appropriateness of the statistics.

With regard the confirmation of incident fractures it is normal practice to include all self-reported fractures or only the confirmed fractures. Why go to the bother of confirming the fractures if you are going to include the self-reported ones anyway? You have not made this clear in your manuscript and numbers of how many were confirmed would be good. Simply to say the majority is not sufficient. If self-reported fractures are included it may also be good to see if there is any difference in results when they are excluded compared to when they are included.

You need to make absolutely clear in your Methods that only fractures of the vertebral, hip, wrist and rib are included in the CANDOO database. Currently the reader would assume that information was collected on all incident fractures and you chose to examine "osteoporotic" sites only.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

In the tables it would make it even more clear regarding the BMD measurements if asterisks were used to indicate in a footnote that BMD was only performed in 447 subjects.

In Table 3-5 family history has not been replaced with maternal hip fracture.

In Figure 1 should maternal hip fracture also be shown in the results for the hip?
What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests