Reviewer's report

Title: Analysis of lipid-lowering drug expenditure growths in South Korea

Version: 2 Date: 18 October 2013

Reviewer: Hasan Basarir

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- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The first sentence of the abstract conclusion is: “The amount of statin consumed increase due to population aging and rising prevalence of hyperlipidemia was found to be the major reason for the recent increased expenditures for lipid-lowering drugs.”

   This is a pleasant “possible” explanation of the results. However, the statistical significance and the magnitude of the impact have not been investigated in this paper to suggest these two factors as the “major reasons”. Further econometric work should be undertaken to provide evidence on these and other potential factors, such as weight gain.

2. It is not clear whether the expenditure figures reported have been adjusted for inflation. If they have not, they should be inflation-adjusted in the final submission.

3. The authors indicate that “The DDD is an assumed average maintenance dose per day of a drug taken for its main indication by an adult weighing 70kg”. The authors suggest that this leads to the “correct measurement” (page 9) for which existing literature “failed to exactly measure the amount of drugs consumed” (page 9). This phrase is misleading, as “Drug consumption data presented in DDDs only give a rough estimate of consumption and not an exact picture of actual use.” (page 22, http://www.whoccc.no/filearchive/publications/1_2013guidelines.pdf). This should be indicated in the limitations, which currently reads “… successfully measured the consumption volume by adopting the DDD” (page 10).

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. The definition of “exiting medicine” is the same as “new entrant” definition in the abstract and also in the main text, and should be amended.

2. The entire manuscript should be proof-read, and the grammar and use of punctuation should be assessed by a professional

3. The equations on pages 5 and 6 were encrypted and could not have been assessed by the referee, despite the efforts of the editorial office

4. There are repeated passages throughout the manuscript. Removal of these would help to shorten the paper considerably.
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.