Author's response to reviews

Title: Gender differences in health care use among the elderly population in areas of Norway and Finland. A cross-sectional analysis based on the HUNT Study and the FINRISK Senior Survey.

Authors:

Anna Liisa Suominen-Taipale (liisa.suominen-taipale@ktl.fi)
Tuija Martelin (tuija.martelin@ktl.fi)
Seppo Koskinen (seppo.koskinen@ktl.fi)
Jostein Holmen (jostein.holmen@ntnu.no)
Roar Johnsen (roar.johnsen@ntnu.no)

Version: 2 Date: 15 June 2006

Author's response to reviews:

To the BioMed Central Editorial Team,

Please find followed by this cover letter our revised manuscript of a research article titled "Gender differences in health care use among the elderly population in areas of Norway and Finland. A cross-sectional analysis based on The HUNT Study and the FINRISK Senior Survey ".

We thank for the reviewers and have tried to make all the corrections suggested. You will find them marked as yellow colour in the manuscript. Detailed answers to the reviewers below:

Reviewer 1 (Anu Kasmel):
- We added reference to distinct regions in 'Titles', 'Abstract', aim and conclusions even though the areas are regarded to represent the whole countries.
- Additional discussion concerning differences in data collection was added (second paragraph in 'Discussion')
- Conclusions in 'Abstract' and end of the 'Discussion' was changed. Statement 'Patient's gender seemed to play a role' was deleted, and replaced by 'The findings revealed differences in self-reported use of secondary care among different genders in areas of Norway and Finland' in the 'Abstract', and 'Elderly women in Nord-Trondelag Norway declared themselves as having a worse health status than men, and could thus be expected to have a greater need for all health care. However, in contrast to elderly women in rural and metropolitan areas of Finland, they reported lower use of specialist and hospital care in spite of need.' at the end of the 'Discussion'.

Reviewer 2 (Hynek Pikhart)

Major Compulsory Revisions:
- We tried to rethink explanations for the shown differences in use of secondary care. We think that differences in womens' educational level is important in addition of the factors we already had discussed. We thus added a paragraph at the end of ‘Discussion’ and a sentence in ‘Conclusions’.

Minor Essential Revisions:
- Table 1. Reference to significance level was corrected.
- Table 2. We added another decimal to even 1.0 OR figures.
- Figure 1. Technical quality of the figure should now be better.

Discretionary Revisions:
- More detailed description of the data was added in 'Methods'
- Table 2: We added age as continuous in adjustments within the 5-years age groups, and some minor changes was shown, and thus corrected to the table.
- Both the data sets include several behavioural variables but in this case we did not find it useful to add them in analyses.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Liisa Suominen-Taipale
Tuija Martelin
Seppo Koskinen
Jostein Holmen
Roar Johnsen