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.

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To the reviewers / Biomed Central Editorial Team /02.08.2006

We appreciate reviewers for their careful reading and comments.

In table 1 we have now tried to correct all the misspellings noticed by the other reviewer, e.g. distributions of sex according to age group and region, and also referral to p-value in marital status (from n.s. to ***) . In the Finnish data there were 19 subjects who could not or did not want to give their educational level. Unfortunately we do not know any detailed reason for this.

Reviewer asks whether we had tried to compare use of services in separate areas in Finland. We did some analyses separately in Helsinki and North-Karelia and find out that results were about the same in both regions. Women used physician, general practice and specialist services more often than men in both areas. Men had more often used hospital services in Helsinki but not in North-Karelia. This was also the case when regarding physiotherapy in younger age group. Differences in hospital care and physiotherapy favouring men were few percentages and not statistically significant. We did not include these results in this paper as the focus was to compare differences between the countries. For this reason we find the datasets comparable enough as both of them include city and rural areas.