Author's response to reviews

Title: The cost of emergency hospital admissions for falls on snow and ice in England during winter 2009/10: a cross sectional analysis

Authors:

Caryl Beynon (C.M.Beynon@ljmu.ac.uk)
Sacha Wyke (S.Wyke@ljmu.ac.uk)
Ian Jarman (I.H.Jarman@ljmu.ac.uk)
Mark Robinson (M.Robinson1@ljmu.ac.uk)
Jenny Mason (J.J.Mason@ljmu.ac.uk)
Karen Murphy (K.Murphy@ljmu.ac.uk)
Mark A Bellis (M.A.Bellis@ljmu.ac.uk)
Clare Perkins (C.Perkins@ljmu.ac.uk)

Version: 3 Date: 23 May 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report

Title: The cost of emergency hospital admissions for falls on snow and ice in England during winter 2009/10: a cross sectional analysis

Version: 2 Date: 23 March 2011

Reviewer: jens lauritsen

Reviewer's report:

In extension to previous report:
- Major Compulsory Revisions

I see no comments or changes in relation to results or analysis at regional level. As indicated in the first report there are rather larger regional differences in temperature. As I read the text there is insufficient clarity in the description of this.

1
Stability of association with temperature across regions. It seems to me that it should be possible to attain temperature data at the same level as the study units “per Government Office Region (using the patient’s postcode of residence to assign each admission to a region).” And the paper also states: “The UK’s Meteorological Office provided: 1) mean winter temperature data for England for winters 2005/06 to 2009/10, and 2) mean weekly temperature data for England television regions for winters 2005/06 to 2009/10.”

if one looks at e.g. :
http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/2010/january/averages.html there is a variation in actual mean temperature for January from -0.2 in East Scotland to 1.8 in England SW and Wales N. This variation is about a quarter of the total visualised range in figure 2. But either I am misreading or there is insufficient use of the actual regional data provided in “Television regions”.

Response: As you rightly suggest, there is a regional difference in temperature and we control for this by modelling the falls/temperature data separately by region. We have explicitly stated that the data are not available at the same geography but that the temperature data is reported at a level which is approximately the same as GOR.

4
Changes over the years. It would be interesting to know whether the temperature relation is completely absent over the years – although the number of datapoints may be too small before last winter. E.g. from http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/datasets/Tmean/date/Scotland_N.txt it is evident that the changes are more than small. :
year average January
2007 4.3
2008 3.1
Response: Our response to this last point indicated that we did not understand what change you were suggesting. Unfortunately, because you have not provided further guidance we are still unable to respond to this point.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests: none