Reviewer's report

Title: Consistency and accuracy of diagnostic cancer codes generated by automated registration: comparison with manual registration

Version: 1 Date: 20 July 2006

Reviewer: Katrin Lang

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a well written manuscript on a very important topic: the accuracy of cancer registration. Moreover, it studies quality aspects of a recently introduced automated data collection method.

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

None

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

1. Background L 7 the authors have written “Advances in information technology have affected all aspects of health care”. The use of term “affect” is not correct here as it has a slightly negative meaning (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/affect): to influence or alter (The experience affected me deeply. The heat of the sunlight affected the speed of the chemical reaction.) In the current context a more suitable term would be “have influenced”.

2. Methods para 3 L 1 when acronym (LCR) is used for the first time, the full term (Lombardy Cancer Registry) should be given.

3. Results Table 3: It seems to me it is easier to read and understand these numbers when presented as quotients of flagged to accepted ratios (F:A), such as 3; 0.5; 0.5; 3.5 etc instead of 1:3, 1:05 etc. This would be analogous to presenting rate ratios.

4. Discussion. L 3 when listing the data accuracy studies, the Venetian study should also give the name of the country (Italy) to comply with the rest of the studies. Same applies when the Limberg study (Schouten et al 1993) is referred to.

Discussion para 2 when referring to the Venetian study (Tognazzo et al 2005) the authors should give their arguments WHY in their view “re-abstraction is not an ideal method for evaluating a new data collection method” and what are the merits of the method of the current study compared to reabstraction.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.