Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 26 July 2006

Reviewer: Robert JAKOB

Reviewer's report:

Technologies for electronic record linkage have been refined in the past two decades. The approaches in use seem to provide a very satisfactory matching rate. This is confirmed by this survey. Cancer registries were involved from the very beginning and this survey shows how good the results can be even with rather heterogeneous sources.

It may be an asset to emphasize these two aspects with the aid of the overall structure of the article. The population sample is described in detail for the manual case generation. For the automated generation it is rather implicit. It remains unclear whether the same sample has been used for comparison or not. Some clarification might be helpful. For SNOMED the version should be mentioned as well as the source of the linkage to ICD-9. Using the Berg classification as split criteria for the site grouping is an excellent idea. However, a sentence to describe the rationale might be helpful.

This is an interesting article that should certainly be published.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.