Reviewer’s report

Title: Consistency and precision of cancer reporting in a multi-wave national panel survey.

Version: 1 Date: 21 April 2010

Reviewer: Silvia de Sanjose

Reviewer’s report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   yes
3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes
6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes
7. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Comments:
The manuscript is well written and it provides data on a topic of interest. To measure the potential error in our estimates of burden of disease helps to add confidence bounds to our measures. The subject is not new and we do know that questionnaire data have always a margin of error. To estimate the potential bias of this error is crucial in planning health activities and the paper provides some how a relief by noticing that the 30% of mismeasurement is likely to be random in the sense of SES. Results are clearly expressed and Tables help to understand the work performed.

- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. I am surprised by the prevalence differences that there is between the panel survey and SEER data. Registry data, for example from CIFC/IARC/WHO is supposed to be the best available information because a large proportion of the date is confirmed using pathology reports. Maybe there is an over estimation of cancer when people are interviewed personally. Maybe the higher prevalence from the panel may also be due to reporting of pre-neoplastic lesions? Could you please provide some discussion on the issue?

2.-Cervical Cancer can also be affected by lack of confirmation. Sometimes women are reported to have a pre-neoplastic lesion leading to cancer that cannot be confirmed afterwards.

3.-In the methods section, it is noted that the prevalence of cancer excludes skin cancer. Contrary, in the results section, 14% of the cancer reported are referred as NM skin cancer. Could you clarify the discrepancy?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.