Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of the impact of disease prevention measures: A methodological note on defining incidence rates

Version: 0 Date: 18 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Zheng Li

Reviewer's report:

The submitted manuscript is well prepared. The author mainly discussed whether the duration of time considered not at risk of suffering a new episode should be deducted from the person's observed time. The conclusion is that based on different research purposes, the choices are different. If "at risk" is for some target disease, the deduction might be appropriate. However, if "at risk" is interpreted as "being under observation", the deduction is not appropriate. And in real life study, the latter is more common. So the author recommended not deducting the duration of time from the observed time.

From my point of view, I think the author is correct that the definition of "at risk" should be clarified in the study protocol. After clearly clarifying the "at risk" definition, we can calculate the incidence rate more accurately. I have some minor comments.

1. C_ij need to be defined more clearly. Because in the context of recurrent events, the censoring time could be defined as the time from the beginning of the study to the time point when the subject dropped out the study, or from the time point when the subject experienced the kth event to the time point when the subject dropped out the study.

2. With regards to the assumption for C_ij, are you assuming non-informative dropout? Will this assumption have any effect on the equation (1),(2),(3)?

3. Do you have any further recommendation for researchers on how to choose the "at risk" definition in the study?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

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