Reviewer’s report

Title: Malignancy during pregnancy in Japan: an exceptional opportunity for early diagnosis

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Reviewer: Elizabeth Hatch

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript presents results from a descriptive study of malignancies diagnosed during pregnancy based on a survey sent to selected Japanese hospitals. Data were collected for 2008 and consisted of cancer site, some clinical details including method of diagnosis, and outcome of pregnancy. A total of 227 cancers were described.

Major comments:

A major concern is that only 50% of hospitals who were approached responded to the survey and there is no way to determine whether the hospitals that responded are representative of all Japanese hospitals. There are also no details given about how these hospitals identified cases of cancer diagnosed during pregnancy. One would assume that these are collected in hospital-based tumor registries, and that electronic medical records were searched for mention of pregnancy and dates of pregnancy and diagnosis of cancer were compared? Further details should be provided. Another major concern is that there are virtually no details given about stage at diagnosis; this would seem particularly important for cervical cancer. Considering that the vast majority of these tumors were diagnosed by cytology, it seems unlikely that they are truly invasive cancers. Further details should be provided about stage at diagnosis. It may also be interesting to present histologic type of ovarian cancer.

Minor comments:

Background: lines 7-10, where were these studies conducted and what were the study designs?

Increases in 'HPV-linked cervical cancer in women of younger age'; this statement needs a reference. Cervical cancer in general (at least in the U.S.) has been declining for many years, in part due to improved screening practices and treatment of early stage lesion. Please provide incidence trends for younger women in Japan.

The results refer to 'in Japan' in several places, but this was a census of at most ½ of the hospitals in Japan (or perhaps even lower since the questionnaires were sent to 'training hospitals' and clinical cancer centers only; community hospitals were not included?). It would be better to refer to the results 'in the present study'.

Discussion, line 17-18, rate should be prevalence; again 'in Japan' is not accurate.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

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

Unable to assess

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

No

**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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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