Author's response to reviews

Title: "Occupational exposure and sinonasal cancer: a review and meta-analysis"

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Answer to the Editor’s Comments:

"My opinion is that the paper is interesting and potentially publishable by BMC Cancer. However, Authors did not take into consideration my previous comments regarding the use of PubMed as the only source of primary studies. Nowadays, the risk for publication bias (ie that papers with non significant results are not published at all) is minimal while the risk for selection bias in meta-analyses (ie, that papers with non significant results are published by less important journals and are, therefore, difficult to locate) is increased much. All guidelines for meta-analyses require that papers are searched in as many databases as possible to minimise the risk for selection bias. Therefore and once again, I invite authors to look for more papers using the plethora of databases that exist."

In agreement to the Editor’s comments, the search on PubMed has been now enlarged by using the suggested databases of Google Scholar and Scopus. Eight further studies were identified as suitable for the aim of the meta-analysis. Moreover the search has been extended in time to 2014 and 2 articles published in 2012 have been included. The text has been revised and calculations modified according to the new dataset, that includes 4 case-control (1-4) and 4 cohort (5-8) studies more. Consequently, also tables and figures have been modified.

Residual papers from the search results were excluded because of the following causes:

- regarding head or neck globally, or anatomical cancer sites (e.g. nasopharynx, lung, oral cavity, oropharynx) not separated into nasal cavities or accessory sinuses (ICD-10: C30/C31; ICD-9: 160)
- occupational studies without any investigation on sinonasal cancer (most frequently regarding lung cancer)
- risk factors not included in the present study (e.g. aluminum, chlorophenols, pesticides, food industry) or other than occupational (e.g. lifestyle)
- previous studies of the same author/authors (the most recent have been chosen)
- when two studies were based on the same sample, the more appropriate was chosen (e.g. Luce D et al 1992 9) in place of Leclerc A et al 1994 10) because more risk factors were analyzed in respect to wood dust only; Zhu et al 2002 11) in place of Caplan LS et al 2000 12), because more recent)
- in one case (Battista G et al 1995 13) the article regarded two studies (one case-control and one case-series report), the first of which was used in the meta-analysis
- papers other than journal articles (e.g. brief communications)
- studies without a case-control or cohort design (e.g. toxicological, case-report, molecular epidemiology studies, reviews)
- books or book chapters
- languages other than English


