Reviewer’s report

Title: Pre-diagnostic body mass index and weight change in relation to colorectal cancer survival among incident cases from a population-based cohort study

Version: 0 Date: 21 Mar 2016

Reviewer: James Dowty

Reviewer's report:

This paper is a resubmission of a paper which I previously reviewed and which the editors subsequently rejected but with the possibility of resubmission. As I noted in my previous review, this is a very well conducted study: the research question is clear and well contextualised; the methods are described concisely; the statistical methods are appropriate; the data is of high quality, being prospectively collected and reasonably large; and the results are clearly presented. My main concerns about the previous version of the paper were related to its interpretation of the results, and the authors have now addressed these concerns (and the other issues that I raised) to my satisfaction. I have a few suggestions for the current version of the paper but these are all relatively minor. Therefore I recommend this paper for publication.

Major Compulsory Revisions

None.

Minor Essential Revisions

None.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Replace "died of CRC" with "died from CRC" throughout the manuscript.

2. Lines 102-3: remove the hyphen in "death from all-causes".

3. Line 150: replace "CRC death" with "CRC-related death" or something similar.
4. Abbreviate the results sections for both BMI and weight change by presenting all results for men before those for women (or the other way around). Currently, phrases like "for X cancer, no significant associations were observed in men" are repeated almost verbatim with X ranging over "colorectal", "colon", "rectal", "distal colon" and "proximal colon". All of these sentences could be replaced by a single sentence listing the colorectal cancer subsites for which no association has been observed. This would make the results much less repetitive and would provide the reader with a concise and useful guide to the tables.

5. Greatly abbreviate the first two paragraphs of the discussion. These simply repeat the results in a lot of detail, with all commentary on these results left to later paragraphs.

6. Lines 255-7: These two sentences appear to be contradictory, so reword them to make it clear that you are highlighting inconsistencies in the existing literature, if this is your intention.

7. Lines 346-9: You seem to be implying that year of diagnosis could confound your associations (via treatment), but your results were adjusted for year of diagnosis so this shouldn't be the case. So I suggest you remove all references to year of diagnosis and, instead, simply and clearly acknowledge that treatment is an important potential confounder which you could not control.

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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:

Acceptable

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