Author's response to reviews

Title: Use of the life table to compare mortality in ethnic groups in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

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Version: 4 Date: 29 July 2015

Author's response to reviews:

Dear Sir, Madam

Thanks very much for looking at my paper again. The comments of your reviewers are clearly knowledgeable and valuable, and I changed the paper to answer their suggestions as much as possible. Below are my detailed remarks on changes made, in italics:

Reviewer: Stephen Begg

a. Submit in spreadsheet format each of the life tables and 95% CI calculations that underpin the reported figures so that an independent verification can occur.

On a website I make all data and all calculations used in this paper available for the readers. I include the links at the bottom of the method section.

b. Include in the methods section a description of the methods used to calculate the 95% CIs.

I comment shortly on the confidence interval in the method section. Furthermore, the methods are available for examination in the spreadsheets on the website. All methods used are according to Chiang’s standard work, as I mention in the method section.

c. Include in the tables the number of deaths in each age group / ethnic strata.

I include the number of death, and the life years (which is the binomial denominator), for each age group and ethnic strata in the tables.

d. Expand the discussion to include commentary on whether the reported differences between groups are significant or not according to the independently verified 95% CIs.

I now do so in both the result and the conclusion section.

Reviewer: Chalapati Rao

1. The author must mark specific indicators in Tables 2a and 2b that are
statistically significant; using specific notation as in the BMC manuscript guidelines. If necessary, the author could consult the editors to get suitable guidance on marking the table accordingly.

I include an extra column in table 2a and 2b to indicate statistical significant differences between the group life expectancy and the overall city life expectancy.

2. The results section should briefly mention these statistically significant findings, and the discussion should include comments on the importance of the statistical significance of differentials.

I mention and discuss statistical significant differences in both the result and the conclusion section.

I hope these changes answer the reviewers concerns and make the paper suitable for publication.

Sincerely,

Daan Uitenbroek