Author’s response to reviews

Title: Using ecological socioeconomic position (SEP) measures to deal with sample bias introduced by incomplete individual-level measures: Inequalities in breast cancer stage at diagnosis as an example

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Version: 2 Date: 12 Jun 2019

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We would like to thank both the editors and the reviewers for their helpful suggestions to strengthen our manuscript. We respond hereafter to their remarks, and the manuscript has been modified in accordance with their suggestions. The reviewers’ comments are in bold, the authors’ responses are in italic below, and samples of the manuscript are underlined.
Reviewer reports:

Marek Brabec (Reviewer 1):

This is a study of substantial practical interest. It shows and demonstrates clearly the dangers of relying on the complete-case analysis only. It uses relatively simple statistical tools and its message is clear. It is well suited for the BMC Public Health readership.

The paper is ready to be published in its present form.

The Authors’ response: We thank the Reviewer 1 for his comment.

Tzu-An Chen (Reviewer 2):

The authors addressed the comments and revised the manuscript adequately. Below are the minor comments:

1. Line 206 - "Amon" was misspelled.

2. Line 311 - Please correct the p-value "(p<0001)". A decimal point is still missing.

3. Line 319 - "biais" was misspelled.

4. Table 1 Heading 2nd row: use consistent capital or lower case n between respondents and non-respondents

Authors’ response: We thank the Reviewer 2 for these comments. These points were corrected directly in the text.

5. Please indicate why a high statistical significance level of 0.2 was chosen for bivariate analyses

Authors’ response: We acknowledge that it was unclear to speak about bivariate and multivariate analyses while our study only presented tests of the distribution of the characteristics between respondents and non-respondents and crude association between EDI, IDI, i-IDI and stage at diagnosis. In the first analysis we choose the threshold at 0.2 in order to not be too conservative regarding the potential differences between the two groups in non-adjusted analyses. To clarify this, we have modified the manuscript as follow (line 177): “We used 0.2 and 0.05 as statistical significance levels for respectively the comparison between respondent and non-respondents and regression analyses.”