Reviewer's report

Title: Is pathology necessary to predict mortality among men with prostate-cancer?

Version: 2  Date: 20 June 2014

Reviewer: Gil L'italien

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Major compulsory revisions
1) more detail needed on variables included in administrative databases.
2) While the study is very well conducted and the appropriate metrics are applied (discrimination and calibration). HOWEVER there is a more efficient way to derive a variable from the administrative database...one could abstract a random sample of medical records and use that abstraction to infer pathology information by developing a claims only algorithm. So pathology data could be defined from the information derived in the claims (ie via an algorithm validated against the medical record). I'd like the authors to discuss this option (see Seeger etal, pharmacoepidemiology and drug safety 2006; 15: 784–792) and have explain why or why not it is applicable here.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

employee and shareholder of bristol myers squibb, a manufacturer of oncology therapies