Author's response to reviews

Title: A population-based study of the extent of colorectal cancer screening in men with HIV

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Author's response to reviews:

January 2, 2015
Terry Cronan, PhD
Associate Editor, BMC Health Services Research
BioMed Central
236 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8HB
United Kingdom

Re: MS 1844207103130996 A population-based study of the extent of colorectal cancer screening in men with HIV

Dear Dr. Cronan:

Thank you for forwarding the comments of the reviewers regarding our manuscript. We have outlined the points below, followed by a response to each.

Changes or responses to Editorial Board member comments

Comment #1: “Please revise the article consistent with Dr. Ong's suggested changes. The screening rates found in your study need to be compared with other countries. If those data are not available, then compare with the general population. Please also make the edits suggested and operationally define the follow-up period.”

Response: We have revised the article in accordance with Dr. Ong’s suggestions (see responses below).

Changes or responses to Reviewer comments:

Reviewer #1: Masahito Jimbo
Comment #1: “This is a well-executed study. The authors meticulously describe the details of their methodology. The database they used provides a comprehensive, population-based (first ever in this context) picture of colorectal cancer screening among HIV-positive men in Ontario, Canada. Statistical analysis is appropriate. Limitations are adequately addressed. They have responded appropriately to previous comments.

Response: We thank the reviewer for this comment.

Reviewer #2: Jason Ong

Comment #1: “Discussion is good but could be better by setting the context of this research with other screening research e.g. how do your results of the screening rate of
49% compare with other countries? Has other studies been done of colorectal screening in HIV-positive populations? if not, compare with other general populations.”

Response: To contextualize our findings, we have added the results of other studies examining colorectal cancer screening in eligible persons with HIV to page 12 of our manuscript, including a brief synopsis of the most relevant comparator study conducted using United States Medicaid claims data.

Comment #2: “Abstract - please add 95% CI for percentages quoted in line 49.”

Response: We have made the requested change.

Comment #3: “Abstract - please clarify what you mean by follow up (line 49) - reading the rest of the paper seems to suggest this is for 5 years?”

Response: We have clarified that this is a 5-year follow-up period.

Comment #4: “Abstract - line 57 - you use the word "under-utilized" but what is this compared to? Most good screening programs have screening rates between 50-70% but I wouldn't think they would classify themselves as 'under-utilized'. Perhaps changing this word might better reflect the findings of the study or rephrasing the sentence to say that less than half of the population were undergoing colorectal screening.”

Response: We have modified the abstract as requested.

Comment #5: “Typo - line 146 - ‘nal cancer’ -> anal cancer?”

Response: We thank the reviewer for catching this typo, and have made the correction.

Comment #6: “line 215/216 - please add 95% confidence intervals for your proportions.”

Response: We have added the 95% confidence intervals as requested.
Comment #7: “line 155 - define the length of time of follow up - ?5 years?”

Response: We have clarified that the length of follow-up is 5 years.

We hope that we have addressed all of the concerns, and that the manuscript is now suitable for publication. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to thank you for your continued interest in our manuscript. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Tony Antoniou, PhD
St. Michael’s Hospital