Author’s response to reviews

Title: Weight loss as a predictor of cancer and serious disease in primary care: an ISAC approved CPRD protocol for a retrospective cohort study using routinely collected primary care data.

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Version: 3 Date: 13 Nov 2017

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Dear DAPR,

Many thanks for the opportunity to revise our protocol manuscript entitled “Weight loss as a predictor of cancer and serious disease in primary care: an ISAC approved CPRD protocol for a retrospective cohort study using routinely collected primary care data.”

Since responding to the second round of reviews we applied to CPRD for an amendment to the ISAC protocol. This was partly prompted by comments made by the reviewers. This amendment has now been approved and so we have updated the manuscript correspondingly.

Firstly we have expanded the cohort age-range to include adults >18yrs instead of restricting to adults >40yrs. This followed further exploratory work that showed that unexpected weight loss coding is distributed evenly across decades for age. With this adjustment we hope to be able to
derive guidance on the most appropriate and age-specific investigative strategies to detect cancer and serious disease in primary care patients with unexpected weight loss.

Secondly we opted to match patients without weight loss to patients with weight loss based on age, sex, and GP practice instead of only GP practice. This will allow us to retain adequate sample sizes in each age and sex strata in the analysis.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Brian D Nicholson

(on behalf of all authors)