

BMJ - Decision on  
Manuscript ID  
BMJ.2015.028305.R1

**Body:** 08-Feb-2016

Dear Dr. Oh

Manuscript ID BMJ.2015.028305.R1 entitled "Screening as a cause of the thyroid cancer epidemic in Korea: Evidence from a nationwide study"

Thank you for sending us this revised paper. We now have comments from our statistical editor, which we'll need you to address. The decision for your paper is still request revision before decision.

We are looking forward to reading the revised version and, we hope, reaching a decision.

Yours sincerely,

Kristina Fišter  
kfister@bmj.com

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In your response please provide, point by point, your replies to the comments made by the reviewers and the editors, explaining how you have dealt with them in the paper.

Reviewer: 1

Recommendation:

Comments:  
Statistical Review

I have reviewed the revised manuscript. The data are generally well presented. Determining that the increase in detection rates is driven by overdiagnosis is very hard to prove - no study design does this robustly. What the authors present is a set of observations which describe the characteristics of the additionally detected cases, which they interpret as being cases which did not require treatment. I would suggest that they think more cautiously about the conclusions - there are some groups where increases have occurred which do not quite fit with this interpretation.

The article is based on data extracted from medical records for a sample of patients diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Confidence intervals need to be used throughout the paper to describe the uncertainty in the findings originating from the use of random sampling. Although they are included in some of the tables, they are largely absent from the abstract, text, and figures.

Could you please reference the world standard of Segi?

A number of figures and tables are lacking full descriptions (e.g. details of all statistics plotted on the box plot, denominators for the rates, etc). Please double check that all required details are specified.

The depiction of mortality rates in Figure 1 is unreadable. The authors might consider using a second scale on the graph given the low mortality rate.

What is the expected time between diagnosis and death for thyroid cancer? Any change in mortality from early diagnosis would not be detectable until this time has passed.

Additional Questions:  
Please enter your name: Prof Jon Deeks

Job Title: PProfessor of Biostatistics

Institution: University of Birmingham

Reimbursement for attending a symposium?: No

A fee for speaking?: No

A fee for organising education?: No

Funds for research?: No

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- g. Footnotes and statements

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**Date Sent:** 08-Feb-2016