

Arnhem, 3-6-2013

Dear Editor,

Thank you very much for your conditional acceptance of our manuscript for publication. We revised our manuscript and made alterations based on the comments of the two reviewers. The changes in the manuscript are underlined.

Comments concerning reviewer 1:

1. Indeed, it has been suggested that the increase of the incidence of acute and chronic pancreatitis in the Western countries could be explained by an increase in alcohol intake. Also, a close relation has been described between the per person alcohol consumption and the numbers of discharges with chronic pancreatitis 6 years later. According to the registry data of Statistics Netherlands the general self-reported alcohol consumption slightly decreased in the period 2000-2005 and in the period 1992-2000 there has only been a minimal increase in alcohol consumption (www.cbs.nl). Therefore, the incidence increase of acute pancreatitis seems not to be explained by a change in alcohol consumption. This subject is now addressed in the manuscript.

2. As mentioned in the Methods section, the incidence and mortality rates were recalculated with reference to the age and sex distribution of the Dutch reference population in 2000 as well as with reference for the age distribution of the European and WHO standard populations. Standardization of the observed trends in incidence and mortality rates based on the Dutch reference population of the year 2000 was done to demonstrate the impact of ageing, a phenomenon which emerges in Dutch health statistics and demand for health care in the last couple of decades. Standardization for both international reference populations was done to enable direct comparisons of trends in incidence and mortality rates across countries that differ by age (and sex) distributions of their respective populations. The purpose and benefit of the use of standard populations are now more clearly addressed in the manuscript.

3. In the Appendix are the stratum-specific multipliers for both acute and chronic pancreatitis incidence estimates described. This is adjusted in the Methods section. The Appendix section was deleted to shorten the length of the manuscript (see also Comments concerning reviewer 2).

Comments concerning reviewer 2:

Indeed, the length of the manuscript is somewhat long. The extensive Materials and Methods section including an appendix on stratum-specific multipliers to compensate for differential linkage failure across subgroups in the population was written to be explicit about the complex methods used and based on the expectation that readers

generally are unfamiliar with record linkage studies. We have now deleted the appendix and added a note that it is available from the corresponding author upon request. In addition, we deleted sentences with examples or unnecessary detail from the Materials and Methods section. We further improved the readability of the Results section by, for instance, reducing the repetition of dimensional statements (per 100,000 persons per year; per million persons per year). Finally, we deleted superfluous examples from the Discussion section and paragraphs that contained content about negligible issues.

Hopefully, we adequately addressed the queries by the reviewers and adjusted the manuscript to your satisfaction. We are open to suggestions for further changes, if necessary.

Looking forward to your reply and on behalf of the other authors,

Yours sincerely,

B.W. Marcel Spanier, MD PhD