

Format for ANSWERING REVIEWERS

February 24, 2014

Dear Editor,



Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 9000-review.doc).

Title: Inflammatory Breast Cancer Clusters: A hypothesis

Author: Paul H. Levine, Salman Hashmi, Ashley A. Minaei, Carmela Veneroso

Name of Journal: *World Journal of Clinical Oncology*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 9000

We are gratified that three reviewers gave this manuscript highest priority and two did not believe changes were needed. These are our comments on the reviews that suggested changes:

Responses to reviews:

1. **Reviewer 02508219** This review is very detailed and we have responded as follows to the comments:

- (1). Massachusetts was corrected.
- (2). Subgrouping by sex could be useful in leukemia and central nervous system cancer but breast cancer is a rare malignancy in males and inflammatory breastcancer in males is so rare that there are only a few case reports, making meaningful analysis by sex impossible.
- (3). We could not see the typing mistake the reviewer referred even after double checking with Spell-check.
- (4). We have substituted Institutional Review Board for IRB.
- (5). We entered the full name of SEER.
- (6). We thank the reviewer for spotting that error.
- (7). We have addressed the suggestion of noting the importance of medical institutions and organizations in studying clusters adding a section before "**The issue of statistical significance**" which includes the reviewer's excellent suggestion about the importance of a standardized approach to cluster evaluations.

Finally, regarding the title, we do not believe this hypothesis has been discussed before and prefer to leave the title as is. Reference No. 13 is our publication and while it does note a seasonal variation in IBC in some parts of the United States, it does not refer in any way to clusters.

2. **Reviewer 00724492** This reviewer accepted the paper as is.

(3) **Yasemin Benderli Cihan** had no suggestions and accepted the paper as is.

3. **Reviewer 02728020** As suggested by this reviewer we have expanded the part related to statistical significance noting the particular difficulties relating to the diagnosis of IBC, which is probably

under-reported. The issues of IBC presenting as venous thrombosis as well as the misdiagnosis of IBC are very important from a clinical perspective but these situations are extremely rare and would not affect the detection or study of clusters. However, we have noted their occurrence also in the section on statistical significance.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Clinical Oncology*

Sincerely yours,

Paul H Levine