Reviewer's report

Title: Bone Mineral Density and the Subsequent Risk of Cancer in the NHANES I Follow-up Cohort

Authors:

Richard L Nelson (althorn@uic.edu)
Mary Turyk (mturyk1@uic.edu)
Jane Kim (jkim@siumed.edu)
Victoria Persky (vpersky@uic.edu)

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Reviewer: tony howell

Level of interest: not specified

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

General Comments:

The authors of related bone mineral bone density by x-ray of the hand which is performed as part of the NHANES 1 epidemiological study. The authors have original and controversial finding. This is the first report of the analysis of the relationship of BMD to colorectal and uterine cancer and gives counter-intuitive results with respect to breast and prostate cancer. Their study appears to be performed very thoroughly. However, the authors have not been very critical with respect to their methodology. There are no details of the drawbacks of using only a hand x-ray. There is no criticism of the technology used to assess bone density by hand x-ray. How does this technology affect the results compared with other technologies?

Specific Comments:

Abstract, background, sentence 2: Not intelligible.
Page 4, paragraph 2: In "the" light ..... , the last sentence indicates that the authors are pursuing 4 hypotheses whereas it appears they have only one - this sentence needs to be clarified.
Page 6, line 1: Outcome "data".
Page 7, paragraph 2: The authors need to give some indication of why they provided the patients into four groups and how these were chosen.
Page 14, last sentence, paragraph 2: It is not clear why the negative findings are all the more important for breast cancer.
Page 14, final sentence: One wonders why such a list is put in?

Competing interests:

None declared.