



Letter

Reply to “Breast cancer mortality in Sweden”

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We thank Drs Rosén and Edberg for their kind interest in our work [1], and for the useful point they made.

Single-year data are subject to random variation, particularly for small countries like Sweden, whereas pooling together a few calendar years leads to more stable estimates, but also to some loss of information.

We therefore fitted a log linear model [2] to the yearly rates from Sweden. The estimated change in rate between 1988 and 1996 was -25.7% ($-3.6\%/year$) for the age group 20–49 years, -5.3% ($-0.7\%/year$) for the age group 50–59 years, -9.9% ($-1.3\%/year$) for the age group 60–69 years, and -13.9% ($-1.9\%/year$) for the age group 70–79 years.

Any of the measures of change in rates remain open to discussion, and even more difficult are the implica-

tions for the interpretation of trends. We agree, however, that mammography is likely to have had an appreciable influence on the falling rates in middle aged and elderly women [3,4].

References

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