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Title	Cancer drug expenditure in British Columbia and Saskatchewan: a trend analysis
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Reviewer 1	Nancy Nixon
Institution	Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary, Alta.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>Interesting article. A couple of issues:</p> <p>1) Introduction: Clarify funding structures in SK and BC. Is there universal coverage for all cancer agents? I found this confusing. We have provided additional information in the second paragraph of the introduction (page 3) and added references to program information from BC Cancer and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (references 12 and 13).</p> <p>2) Could there be a better explanation of how age and population growth were adjusted for? Maybe just an extra sentence. An additional description of the adjustment method was included in the Methods section (page 5).</p> <p>3) Re-read and make sure all sentences make sense and no grammatical errors. We have reviewed and edited the paper as suggested.</p>
Reviewer 2	Christopher Longo
Institution	DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>Overall this is a well written paper, with both clear methods and results. I found a few places where the conclusions did not match well with the finding, but otherwise I think this work provides a valuable contribution to the literature</p> <p>Specific comments</p> <p>Abstract (page 2; p 9 of 28)</p> <p>Paragraph 3, line 24-25 - Missing % after 9.2 We have added the missing % sign.</p> <p>Paragraph 4, line 32-33 - I find this conclusion inappropriate/difficult to interpret. In fact I prefer the line provided at the end of the discussion (page 10; p17 of 28, line 27-29). OR perhaps change to "Understanding the recent trends in systemic therapy is an important first step...."</p> <p>We have updated the conclusion of the abstract (page 2) to be more consistent with the results and interpretation presented in the paper.</p> <p>Introduction (page 3; p 10 of 28)</p> <p>First paragraph, line 25-32 – This reads as a conclusion, so more suited to the discussion OR don't present as a conclusion in the introduction. We have restructured the Introduction to remove this statement (page 3, first paragraph), and to strengthen the rationale for this study.</p> <p>Methods (page 4; p 11 of 28)</p> <p>First paragraph, line 26 – "Supportive care drugs were not included in the analysis" How was this defined? Is appropriate to provide a list of drug classes that are excluded e.g. are anti-emetics classified as supportive care? We have added a line to the first paragraph of the Methods section (page 4) to clarify that we used each pharmacy's own classification to define supportive care drugs.</p> <p>Results (page 6; p 13-28)</p> <p>Second paragraph, line 17-18 – several typos remove "in" between expenditure and rose and add % to 9.2 We have addressed the typos</p> <p>Interpretation (page 8; p 15 of 28)</p> <p>First paragraph line 23-26 -What is your justification for saying "this is not a function of improved tolerability" Please expand. We have expanded this section to clarify what we originally meant by this statement, interpreting the age-specific trends in utilization (page 9). If oral drugs are generally more tolerable and less toxic we might expect greater uptake in the older, more frail patient groups, but we did not observe this in the data.</p> <p>Page 9; p16 of 28</p> <p>First paragraph, line 32-33 – Please provide a brief explanation/definition of joinpoint analysis Page 10; p17 of 28 We have added a short definition of joinpoint (segmented regression) analysis (page 11).</p> <p>Last paragraph, line 22 – typo "drives" should read "drivers" We have addressed this typo.</p>
Reviewer 3	Karen Lee
Institution	CADTH, CDR, Ottawa, Ont.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>Interesting paper. Additional details on the analyses as well as the interpretation of the results would be helpful to understand how this research might guide further research. Also highlighting some of the results would further add to the paper. The manuscript has been edited extensively to address the above comments, and to improve clarity and interpretation of results.</p>