



Letter to the Editor

Letter to editor: Reply on question of Marques JR et al. regarding the paper entitled: “The LifeLines cohort study: Prevalence and treatment of cardiovascular disease and risk factors”.



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Dear Editor,

We like to thank Marques et al. for their kind words regarding our paper “The Lifelines Cohort Study: Prevalence and treatment of cardiovascular disease and risk factors [1]” and are pleased to discuss the appropriate term for the study design of the Lifelines cohort study with them. If we understood it correctly, Marques et al. are wondering whether Lifelines would rather be an “exposed-control” than a “case-control” study, since Lifelines included participants through three different ways.

Marques et al. describe the inclusion of participants of the Lifelines cohort study correctly. First, individuals of the northern part of the Netherlands were invited through their general practitioner independent of their health status, after which family members were included as well. Additionally, individuals were able to self-register via the website [2]. All inhabitants of the northern part of the Netherlands were able to participate, independent of their individual health status

or risk profile. Lifelines is therefore representative for the adult population of the north of the Netherlands [3].

The design of the Lifelines cohort study is a (3-generational family) prospective cohort study. We agree with Marques et al. that in prospective cohort studies exposed and non-exposed individuals are compared in their effect on incident disease outcomes [4]. However, for this particular study [1] we performed cross-sectional analysis on the baseline data of the Lifelines cohort study and we did not use the longitudinal/prospective (exposed-control) aspect of the data. If readers are interested in more information about the Lifelines cohort study or want to use the Lifelines data, they can visit the website: www.lifelines.nl.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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