



## Letter to the Editor

## The LifeLines Cohort Study: Prevalence and treatment of cardiovascular disease and risk factors

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## Dear Editor,

We have read and discussed with great interest in our research group the ambitious LifeLines Cohort Study describing cardiovascular characteristics of huge number of participants in three generations [1]. Although the prevalence, risk factors and treatment of cardiovascular disease related to the Dutch population have been addressed, its aim and data presented are noteworthy worldwide. However, in our understanding, the cohort study reported in the article (initially consisting of participants aged between 25 and 50 invited by their general practitioners) has changed its original design at the time of recruitment of participants invited by their relatives and self-registered via the LifeLines website, turning in a triple cohort [2,3]. Moreover, as the constituent three groups have been recruited in different ways, the study has seized to represent a selection based on the general population.

We believe that, with the additional recruitments (addressing three generations, i.e., aged 8–18 years, adults ( $\geq 18$  and  $\leq 65$  years) and older

aged (65+)), the study could be considered as “exposed-control” one. This not commonly-used nomenclature is based on the understanding that the control group is selected by the factor under study (healthy cardiovascular ageing in the present case), whereas in the case-control study this group is selected by the outcome [2,4]. A similar concept is used when dealing with multiple cohort studies and external controls [3], also discussed by Song and Chung [5].

**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**References**

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