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## Letter to the Editor

## Reply to the Editor

*J Thorac Cardiovasc Surg* 2011;142 (5):1290

### Related Article

#### **Methodologic issues regarding background mortality in observational studies**

Ruben L.J. Osnabrugge, Stuart J. Head, and Arie Pieter Kappetein

*J. Thorac. Cardiovasc. Surg.* 2011 142: 1289-1290.

We thank Osnabrugge and colleagues for their interest in our article and appreciate their comments on the statistical methodology that we adopted for the comparison between the survival of elderly patients undergoing aortic valve replacement (AVR) and the expected survival of the age- and sex-matched general population.

We acknowledge that the method suggested by Osnabrugge and colleagues should be applied in studies with extended long-term follow-up, because of a strong correlation between age and length of follow-up, to avoid underestimation of the general population survival. This statistical method is validated for long-term follow-up, but [...]