

Author's response to reviews

Title: Estimating the incidence of lung cancer attributable to occupational exposure in Iran

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Author's response to editor and reviewers' comments:

Abstract

Editor's comment:

1. ILO, CAREX and EU need to be defined in the abstract, even if they are defined in the text.

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

2. In the first line of the Results, "included" should be "identified" or something similar.

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

3. Is it really necessary or useful to say what the smallest industry sector was?

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

4. In the last sentence before the Conclusion, "of" should be inserted before "lung".

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

5. In the Conclusion, the semi-colon after "countries" should be a comma.
Introduction

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

6. Third last line of para 1 on page 3: "Epidemiologic studies of these carcinogens have reported..." should read "Epidemiologic studies of these carcinogens have reported..." because the deleted words are presented again at the end of the sentence.

Methods

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

7. Line 3 on page 5: In Step 4), the study isn't estimating the fraction of lung cancer. This has already been done in Step 3. Step 4) is calculating the NUMBER of cases of lung cancer. I think this is probably just a language issue, but it should be corrected here and elsewhere in the paper.

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

8. Last sentence of para 2 on page 5. Where did the estimate of four for the

workforce turnover in Iran come from? It needs to be referenced, or more detail provided to justify it. Note that I am not disputing the figure used for turnover, but it does need to be justified.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The reference cited.

Editor's comment:

9. Last sentence of first para on page 6: It should begin "To estimate the fraction number of lung cancer incidence cases attributed..."

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

10. The method used to calculate confidence intervals does not appear to be described or referenced. This needs to be done.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The methods to calculate the CI was described.

Editor's comment:

Results

11. Line 2 on page 7: I think the authors should use "work-related" rather than workplace-related" because some exposures might not occur in what everyone sees as a formal workplace (e.g. truck drivers exposed to diesel exhaust).

Editor's comment:

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

Discussion

12. Third last line of page 7. There is a superscript "7" after the word "carcinogen". It seems to be an error and probably should refer to a reference.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The manuscript was largely revised.

Editor's comment:

13. I think in the last sentence of para 2 on page 8, "definitely" should be "probably" and "...exposure or the small..." should read "...exposure and/or the small...". Basically, isn't this due to the fact that 91% of the female workforce was classed as being in the Service industries?

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The manuscript was largely revised.

Editor's comment:

14. Fifth line of page 9: The abbreviation "ISIC" doesn't seem to be needed because it is not used again as far as I can tell.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The manuscript was largely revised.

Editor's comment:

Conclusion

15. Fine.

References

16. There are some major problems with the references, although these could be easily fixed:

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The references were fixed

Editor's comment:

17. The same reference is quoted multiple times (which is fine), with a different number used each time (which is NOT fine). See, for example, references 16, 19,

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The references were fixed

Editor's comment:

22 and 28; and references 20, 21, 26, 27 and 32.

18. Some of the references are clearly wrong, as they do not relate to the particular point being made, and at least one does not seem to have anything to do with the topic at all (see reference 36, which is on vascular changes in protoporphyria!). See, for example, references 30 and 31.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The references were fixed

Editor's comment:

19. Some of the references have incomplete author lists. It looks as if there has been an automatic formatting problem. See, for example, references 2, 13, 14 and 34.

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The references were fixed

Editor's comment:

Tables

20. The numeric columns in all the tables should have decimal tabs.

Author's response: The editor's request was met.

Editor's comment:

How did the paper's authors deal with co-exposure to multiple agents?

Did you assume non-overlapping exposures (i.e. % workers exposed to different agents in each sector additive)? If there was co-exposure (either uncorrelated or correlated), were the relative risks multiplied or was a single one considered for group exposed to multiple agents?

Author's response: The editor's request was met. The fact that a non-overlapping exposure were assumed was stated in the method and material section

Editor's comment:

The lung cancer rates come from Tehran registry and the occupational data are national. Are you able to obtain data from other registries to make national estimates of cancer incidence? Or can you get estimates of exposure in Tehran only so that you can make the focus of the whole paper Tehran?

Author's response: The editor's request addressed by describing the Tehran population based registry and the rational for its use as a representative of the country were addressed in methods section and it was again addressed in the discussion.