Proceed with estimation of area effects on health

Are the spatial units appropriate for measuring the selected environment characteristics and estimating area effects? Are they homogeneous along characteristics of interest?

NO

Implications for study design
Environment characteristics measured with error
Misestimation of area effects on health

YES

Designing spatial units for the specific research question
Spatial units homogeneous along selected environment characteristics

Spatial units of convenience
Census tracts, electoral wards, boroughs, postcode sectors, etc.

An approach for such an assessment is proposed in this study

« Typical » approach