Reviewer’s report

Title: Pancreatic Cancer Clusters and Arsenic-Contaminated Drinking Water Wells in Florida

Version: 3  Date: 10 August 2012

Reviewer: Melissa Slotnick

Reviewer’s report:

I believe the authors addressed many of the study limitations adequately in the discussion section; however, the main concern I have with this manuscript is that the higher incidence of pancreatic cancer is observed in the urban areas, and the authors use well water concentration as a proxy for exposure in these areas. I'm guessing that people living in urban areas are not likely drinking well water, but treated city water. If this is the case, it would be more accurate to run a model with even 1-2 city water measurements available from public records. I understand that this is an ecological study and the problems with exposure misclassification have been discussed; however, using groundwater samples does not seem like an adequate measure of exposure (even ecologically) for those in urban areas unless the authors can document that a significant portion of the population consumes well water in urban areas. If this is true and that link can be made -or, if the authors observe the same results when substituting a city water measurement for well water measurements in urban areas - then I feel the manuscript would be acceptable for publication. I trust the authors can make these changes and/or address this concern when communicating their conclusions.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests