Reviewer’s report

Title: Ambient biomass smoke and cardio-respiratory hospital admissions.

Version: 1 Date: 29 May 2007

Reviewer: Douglas W Dockery

Reviewer’s report:

General
This paper presents a case-crossover analysis of the association of daily PM10 with respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions in a small community affected by bushfires. While positive associations were found, there is not specific evidence of a link to PM10 from bush fires specifically.

Manuscript pages were not numbered. Page numbers below start with title page.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. Pg 5, para 1: Were no PM10 measures collected in 2001-2003?
2. Pg 9, para 2: What lag associations are reported for ischemic heart disease associations? Was running mean pM10 over multiple lagged days explored?
3. References: Important references [27,33, and 37] essential to review, not available and copies not provided.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

4. Pg 5, para 3: What is meant by “passive filter collections”? Normally this means no active sampling, that is no pump.
5. Pg 6, para 1: Does the Partisol measure PM10 “gravimetrically”? This means to determine mass by weighing, e.g. on a balance.
6. Table 1: What is the base population of total, indigenous, and <15 years old?
7. Table 2: How many days of measurements? Percentiles would be more informative.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

9. Pg 7, para 1: What is the population of the sample base in Darwin?
10. Pg 8, para 1: For highly skewed data such as influenza consultations, percentiles would be more informative.
11. Pg 14, Acknowledgements: Who is “Debbie”?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests.
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'