Author's response to reviews

Title: The Chernobyl childhood leukemia study: background & lessons learned Authors: Martin C. Mahoney1,2, Kirsten M. Moysich1,2, Philip L. McCarthy, Jr.1, Richard C. McDonald3, Valery F. Stepanenko, PhD4, Robert W. Day, MD, PhD5, Arthur M. Michalek, PhD1,2 1Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Buffalo, NY 2School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Buffalo, NY 3International Consortium for Research on the Health Effects of Radiation (ICRHER), Bartlesville, OK 4Medical Radiological Research Center, Obninsk, Russia 5Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Seattle, WA martin.mahoney@roswellpark.org kirsten.moysich@roswellpark.org philip.mccarthy@roswellpark.org richard.valeri@obninsk.com rday@fhcrc.org arthur.michalek@roswellpark.org Corresponding Author: Martin C. Mahoney, MD, PhD, Division of Cancer Prevention & Population Sciences, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Elm and Carlton Streets, Buffalo, NY 14263; Tel: 716-845-5790; Fax: 716-845-7783; e-mail: martin.mahoney@

Authors:

Martin C. Mahoney (martin.mahoney@roswellpark.org)
Kirsten M. Moysich (kirsten.moysich@roswellpark.org)
Philip L. McCarthy Jr (philip.mccarthy@roswellpark.org)
Richard C. McDonald (dickmc@bartnet.net)
Valery F. Stepanenko (valeri@obninsk.com)
Robert W. Day (rday@fhcrc.org)
Arthur M. Michalek (arthur.michalek@roswellpark.org)

Version: 7 Date: 29 October 2004

Author's response to reviews: see over
October 29, 2004


Dear Drs. Grandjean and Ozonoff:

Response to your email of 29 October are presented below:

1. We are unable to locate “see over” within the text of our cover letter of 26 October. However, upon viewing the PDF on the website “see over” does appear. We believe that this resulted from a prior attempt to upload files. In process of uploading, a “submission” occurred before the cover letter was uploaded. Our cover letter from 26 October is attached at the bottom of this note.

2. Indents used for each new paragraph; soft return inserted in headline.

3. Spaces inserted between List of Abbreviations, Competing Interests, Author contributions, and Acknowledgments sections.

4. All issue numbers have been removed from the list of references; reference #13 has been revised to proper format.

5. Map is an original illustration developed by us specifically for this paper; no reprint authorization is needed.

6. Text on page 5 has been revised.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Martin C. Mahoney, MD, PhD

October 26, 2004

Dear Drs. Grandjean and Ozonoff:

We are pleased to report back on our modifications to our manuscript entitled “Lessons Learned from our Childhood Leukemia Study in Chernobyl.” We were most gratified to receive the positive comments from the third and final reviewer and have dutifully responded to each one of his concerns. Moreover, we have addressed those editorial matters that you related to us in your e-mail of October 8.
Editorial/Reviewer Comments (10/20/04):

1. All unnecessary capitalization has been removed from the title.

2. Full addresses have now been provided for all authors.

3. All hyphens have been removed from line breaks.

4. The abstract has been significantly reduced.

5. All double spaces between words have been removed.

6. Per the editors’ request, we have put the word “and” between “collaborators” and “then”.

7. In the very last sentence of the paper, before the references, we have changed “is” to “are”.

8. The list of abbreviations has been added to the end of the main text without starting a new page.

9. The entire paper is now, per the editors’ instructions, double-spaced, even the references.

10. We have now bolded the heading of the reference section and the figure number and title and the table number and title.

11. A figure legend is now immediately following figure title and not in a separate section

12. Reference 6 has now been corrected.

13. Figure 1 has been cropped and adjusted per your request.

14. We have also responded to the various concerns brought to our attention by the third reviewer. Specifically:

15. Reference 10 has been cited on page 3, per the reviewers request.

16. On page 4, first paragraph the term “cohort/study size” has been replaced with “sample size”.

17. The term oblast has now been defined.

18. We have modified the phrase on page 5 that stated “…English would be used progressively” to now read “English would be used as the common language which was”. This more clearly describes what was actually done.

18. The reviewer requested additional detail be provided about changes in leadership on page 7. These changes were mentioned on page 6 and there is no need to provide additional information.

19. The reviewer suggests that it might be interesting to hear more about how local culture either contributes to or hinders high participation rates. We agree that this would be an interesting ethnographic study, but that is beyond the scope of our current report. Thus, the ethnographic description may be reported on in the future.

20. The reviewer asked what the pluses are for using physician interviewers. The advantages are cited on page 9 as “…credible representatives, were respected by study participants, and could be depended on to provide accurate and verifiable data”.
21. The reviewer inquires whether back translation of the questionnaires was performed. We have now added a sentence on page 10 that states “Instruments were back translated into English to assure accuracy of translation.”

22. The reviewer asks whether local official were also wary of dealing with foreigners. The answer to this is no and we do not see the necessity of including a discussion of this in the paper.

Editorial Comments (10/26/04):

1. all editing issues addressed (paragraph spacing, typos corrected; reworded sentence on page 13; changed US to USA; references reformatted; all authors listed for each reference; ABCC TR spelled out).

2. author names consistent with submission page.

3. reference #13 clarified.

4. map is an original created specifically for this paper; no reprint authorization is needed.

We appreciate the various comments and concerns made by the third reviewer, as well as by the editor. We believe that we have been responsive to all suggestions and that they have further strengthened our presentation and will enhance the utility of our lessons to the readership. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Martin C. Mahoney, MD, PhD