Author's response to reviews

Title: Occupational Exposures and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: Canadian Case-Control Study

Authors:

Chandima P Karunanayake Dr (cpk646@mail.usask.ca)
Helen H McDuffie Dr. (mcduffie@sask.usask.ca)
James A Dosman MD (james.dosman@usask.ca)
John J Spinelli Dr. (jspinelli@bccrc.ca)
Punam Pahwa Dr. (pup165@mail.usask.ca)

Version: 4 Date: 29 July 2008

Author's response to reviews: see over
Date: July 29, 2008

Editor-in-Chief,
*Environmental Health*
BioMed Central Ltd
Middlesex House
34-42 Cleveland Street
London W1T 4LB, UK

**Re: Revised Manuscript submission – Manuscript # MS: 1905360018189435**
**Occupational exposures and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma: Canadian case-control study**

Dear the Environmental Health Editorial Team,

Thank you for considering the manuscript “Occupational Exposures and Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma: Canadian Case-Control Study” for publication in your journal. We have considered and addressed the reviewers’ concerns. Please find enclosed:

- A response to the reviewers
- Revised version of the manuscript

Sincerely,

Punam Pahwa PhD
Associate Professor
Dept. of community Health and Epidemiology
Canadian center for Health and Safety in Agriculture
University of Saskatchewan
Phone: (306) 966 8799
Reviewer’s report
Title: Occupational Exposures and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma: Canadian Case-Control Study
Version: 2 Date: 8 July 2008
Reviewer: Pierluigi Cocco
Reviewer’s report:
The revised version looks much better. However, there are still a few minor points that need to be corrected.

Reviewer’s Comment:
1. From the authors’ response to the reviewers’ comments, it looks clear that the term radium is used to define exposure to “ionizing radiation” of whatever undefined type. To comply with standard definitions in the scientific literature, the authors should replace “radium” with “ionizing radiation” throughout the paper.

Author’s response:
Agreed with reviewer and changed “radium” with “ionizing radiation (radium)”. We need to mention radium in the brackets to identify it, since we looked at uranium and it was not show any relation to NHL.

Reviewer’s Comment:

Author’s response:
Missing word “agricultural” was added in front of occupations in line 12 of the introduction (see page 3 in revised version).

Reviewer’s Comment:
3. Briefly remind what was the response rate in cases and controls. For controls, give the response rate for the total control group, as well as for population and hospital controls separately.

Author’s response:
Controls were identified randomly from population based sources in each province matched with age. We do not have hospital controls and we only have population based controls. The response rates for both cases and controls were included into the Discussion (see page 11 lines 2-3 in revised version).
Reviewer’s Comment:
4. First line on page six.. List here what were the adjusting covariates retained in the log regression model.

Author’s response:
The adjusting covariates in the conditional logistic regression model were age and province of residence. This information was included into the text (see page 6 lines 3-4).

Reviewer’s Comment:
5. Show number of cases and controls in each category of duration in Table 3.

Author’s response:
The number and percentage of cases and controls in each category of duration was included to Table 3 (see page 25 in the revised version).

Reviewer’s Comment:
6. The results for all the exposures that were analyzed should be reported in Table 4, along with the number of exposed cases and controls, and not only those showing a positive finding.

Author’s response:
The results for all the exposures analyzed were reported in Table 4, along with the number of exposed cases and controls (see pages 26-27 in the revised version).

Reviewer’s Comment:
7. Page 7, first line of third paragraph. “…the results of a multivariate conditional logistic regression models…”

Author’s response:
Page 7, first line of third paragraph changed from
“Table 5 shows the results of a multivariate conditional logistic regression models for the long held jobs of farmer and machinist.” to
“Table 5 shows the results of multivariate conditional logistic regression models for the long held jobs of farmer and machinist.”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
The Environmental Health Editorial Team Comments:

Reviewer’s Comment:

In our previous message, we had already asked you to make sure that your manuscript conforms with the journal style, and we now have to repeat this request. We specifically indicated that author qualifications should not be included on the title page.

Author’s response:

Author qualifications were removed from the title page (see page 1 in the revised version).

Reviewer’s Comment:

We also asked you to capitalize only the first word, and proper nouns, in the title, and to pluralize Conclusion? in abstract (Conclusions). Pluralize abbreviation? (Abbreviations), and leave out 'list of' in the section title.

Author’s response:

We capitalized only the first word and proper nouns in the title. We Pluralized “Conclusion” to “Conclusions” in abstract and “Abbreviation” to “Abbreviations” and leave out “list of” in the section title (see page 1, page 2 and page 11 in revised version).

Reviewer’s Comment:

Use EH format requirements for references (avoid 'and' before the last author, colon after authors, use of et al? is not appropriate, format style for chapter in book & web link needs revision, etc.). In tables, ensure borders of each cell display as black lines, titles (max of 15 words) should appear above the table, the legend (or key) below the table.

Author’s response:

We formatted all the references according to EH format requirements (see page 13-22 in the revised version). In all tables, we displayed borders of each cell by black lines. Tables’ titles were changed to maximum of 15 words and the legend was included below the table (See Table 2, page 24 and Table 4, page 26 in the revised version).