Author's response to reviews

Title: How do we sell the hygiene message? With Dollars, Dong or Excreta?

Authors:

Peter K M Jensen (petkji@sund.ku.dk)
Pham D Phuc (pdphuc72@yahoo.com)
Line G W Knudsen (ligk@sund.ku.dk)

Version: 2 Date: 16 December 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
The Environmental Health Editorial Team

Dear editor/reviewer,

We are very grateful for your consideration and positive peer reviews of our paper.

Below, you will find our comments for reviewer 1 as reviewer 2 did not have any comments.

Our overall comment:

It is correct that this paper is part of a larger research project. A research paper from this project has just been accepted by this journal (Jensen et al. Environmental Health 2009, 8:57) whereas this paper should only be seen as a research note. The reason we have chosen to write a research note is that we find our approach new and hopefully inspiring to others in terms of how to use an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving within the field of environmental hygiene. Thus, it is our hope that this note could be read as a supplement to our other paper and that our new approach could inspire further research.

Regarding the language comment, we have now carefully corrected the language and hope that you find the paper improved and more readable. All changes to the paper are listed at the end of this letter.

1. It is also surprising to us that the household size is as small as it is. Thus we have now added an additional reference ((John Bryant, 1996) to support that the official household size is only 4,6 (in rural area). We estimate that the 2,6 are children. Thus, we have changed the estimate of 400 kg of excreta production in each household to 500 kg as a realistic minimum estimate.

2. We chose to use the poorest 20 % of the Vietnamese population as the example in order to illustrate the amount of money the excreta constitutes for a poor rural household. It is important to focus on the poorest part of the population as they are often the households with the lowest hygienic standard and thereby most prone to hermit infections etc. due to their low standard of living. The focus of our paper is the households with a composting latrine. Therefore, our estimations are based on the number of people using a composting latrine (20.5 %) and not the entire population of 84 million. We have now added a reference to the number (1). It is not the intention of this paper to estimate the public health expenditure, or to legitimise the use of excreta. The goal of this paper is limited to an estimation of the economic value of the current reuse of excreta in rural Vietnam.
3. The topic of policy recommendations has been addressed in our other paper, which has just been accepted in this journal (Jensen et al. Environmental Health 2009, 8:57), and thus we have now added a reference to that paper.

We hope that this letter has addressed your comments in a satisfying manner. You are very welcome to contact us again if you need further comments.

We thank you again for your time and consideration and we look very much forward to hearing from you again.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Kjær Mackie Jensen

List of corrections

Page 1
Line 14: Line Gran West Knudsen corrected to Line Gram Knudsen West
Line 24: LGWK corrected to LGKW, ligk@sund.ku.dk corrected to line_g_k@hotmail.com

Page 2 - Abstract
Line 9: “of” inserted
Line 12: 12,5 changed to 15,5
Line 13: 12 changed to 15
Line 18: 75 changed to 83
Line 20: “into account” moved to end of sentence

Page 3
Line 3-4: “Where the perception for” corrected to “While the appreciation of”
Line 4: “the perception of” (hygiene) inserted
Line 8: “hygiene message becomes” corrected to “hygienic messages become”
Line 12: per cent corrected to “percent”
Line 13: “cheep” corrected to “cheap”
Line 21: mode of behavior corrected to “behavioral ways”
Line 23: “without” inserted
Line 24: “vein” corrected to “vain”
Line 25: “independent” corrected to “separate”
Line 26: “to” inserted

Page 4:
Line 1: “Thus” inserted
Line 2: “have” moved
Line 7: “Therefore” moved to beginning of sentence
Line 10: “have” deleted

Page 5:
Line 9: reference inserted
Line 9: “following” deleted, “according to” inserted
Line 19: Inserted “With an average household size of 4.6 (REF) the households would have an”
Line 20: 400 changed to 500
Line 21: 2.8 changed to 3.5
Line 23: 14 changed to 17.5

Page 6:
Line 2: 12 changed to 15
Line 20: 100 changed to 1
Line 22: US$ 53,382,000 changed to 58,720,200
Line 24: 1.7 changed to 1.9
Line 26: 75 changed to 83

Page 7:
Line 2: six changed to eight
Line 11: “non-expensive” deleted, “inexpensive” inserted
Line 11: “-related” deleted
Line 12: Reference included
Line 16: “goes for” deleted, “applies to” inserted
Line 16: “as well” deleted
Line 20: “actually” deleted