

Author's response to reviews

Title: Lessons from the removal of lead from gasoline for controlling other environmental pollutants: a case study from New Zealand

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Author's response to reviews: see over

Second Response to Editor and Reviewer Comments on: Wilson & Horrocks “Lessons from the removal of lead from gasoline for controlling other environmental pollutants: a case study from New Zealand”

We thank the Editor and the reviewer for their helpful additional comments. Specific responses to these are detailed below.

Comments from the Editor

Editor’s Comments (1): In regard to the responses to reviewers, we suggest that they be reflected also in a revised manuscript, not just in the response.

Our Response: In the last revision we actually did make significant changes to the manuscript in response to all of Reviewer 1 (Lanphear) non-discretionary requirements. We also made changes in response to all of the discretionary comments – except for expanding on the role of NGOs (which was not considered in the scope of this paper and requires more in-depth analysis in a future paper we are planning).

Also in the last revision we made changes in response to the discretionary requirements from Reviewer 2 (Kovarik). This reviewer made no non-discretionary comments.

Similarly for Reviewer 3 (Tong) we made changes based on all of the comments. These are repeated below – but with additional responses detailed made by us.

Reviewer Comment (1): It remains unclear why policymakers are not effective in countering industry arguments. Although the authors mentioned a few reasons, how important is each of them in the government decision-making process?

Our first response: We have explained some of the potential reasons: (i) The policymakers did not have a strong precautionary approach framework; (ii) They did not make optimal use of the research evidence (from NZ or overseas); (iii) there was weak technical capacity within the government departments (and relatively few staff); and (iv) multiple agencies were involved. The complexity of these issues makes us wary about putting relative weights on the importance of these reasons. For this to be justified we would probably need far more research evidence eg, multiple key informant interviews and more comprehensive examination of official documentation.

Our second response: To further strengthen our comments on the complexities we have now added to the end of the first paragraph of the *Conclusions Section* the following: “Further research to clarify the importance of these different reasons could be based on multiple key informant interviews and a more comprehensive examination of official documentation.”

Reviewer Comment (2): The authors indicated that the Senior Toxicologist was the only person who had expertise in the health risk assessment in the Department of Health at that time. What is his/her role in environmental health policymaking and risk management?

Our first response: We have elaborated to say that this position involved providing technical advice to senior public health officials. We have also elaborated that there were no staff with specific training in environmental health epidemiology. Further details on the specific skill profiles of the Department of Health's staff is probably not justified given the desirability of keeping the article at a manageable length.

Our second response: We have further elaborated on this issue by adding a sentence: "There were also no government agencies with environmental epidemiologists upon which the Department could call upon to obtain advice."

Reviewer Comment (3): A substantial editing is required. For example, "The capacity within the Department of Health for independent analysis of the leaded gasoline and vehicle fuel alternatives issues ..." (p6) should be changed into "The capacity within the Department of Health for independent analysis of the issues about the leaded gasoline and vehicle fuel alternatives ..."

Our first response: We agree and have made this suggested change. We have also gone throughout the whole text to improve the wording. A professional editor has also now critiqued the manuscript for us and improved its readability.

Our second response: We have further reviewed the manuscript and made various wording improvements (including some sentence shortening and removal of endashes). If necessary we could change the spelling from "British English" to American English – if that is more appropriate to the readership of "Environmental Health". We can provide a version showing track changes of all the changes if you wish to see this. We have also had a professional editor go over the revised version of this manuscript.

Reviewer Comment (4): Relevant reference(s) should be provided in many places. For example, "The lag between the United States Environmental protection Agency's (EPA) launch of its initiative to phase-out lead from gasoline in 1973 (Ref) to the start of New Zealand's phase-down in 1986 (Ref) ..." in p3.

Our first response: We agree and have improved the cross-referring to Table 1 (where relevant references are cited). In other parts of the manuscript we have also improved the referencing (or cross-referring to the Table which contains the references).

Our second response: We have further reviewed the manuscript and not identified any gaps in the referencing.

Editor's Comments (2): Regarding formatting, on the title page, please indicate study type (Commentary), remove position titles (senior lecturer, etc.), capitalize only the first word, and proper nouns, in the title.

Our response: All done.

Editor's Comments (3): Sections for a Commentary are: Title page, Abstract, Introduction, Discussion, Conclusions, List of abbreviations used (if any), Competing interests, Authors' contributions, Acknowledgments, References, Figure legends (if any), Tables and captions (if any). Please ensure that all section titles are included - in that order.

Our response: All done.

Editor's Comments (3): In table 1, the title is above the word limit, repeated title should be removed, additional text should be in footnote.

Our response: All done.

Editor's Comments (4):

- In the references, 'et al' is not appropriate - list all authors.
- Indicate all page numbers (1517-1526 instead of 1517-26), inclusion of month in addition to volume number is not needed.
- Ref 2 appears to be a chapter/article in a book, use appropriate format.
- In refs 11, 30, 42, 69, 71, 75, and 102, use EH link format.
- For refs 37 and 38, follow article within proceedings format.
- In ref 61, check punctuation marks.
- In refs 85 and 95, spell out MfE in author area (when first listed).
- The format for press releases and letters (40,45, 48, and 63) seems OK, but will depend on review by the publisher.

Our response: All done.

Comments from Reviewer 3 (Tong)

Reviewer's Comments (1): The authors have addressed my concerns to some extent, but I suggest to incorporate their answers in the text.

Our response: As detailed in our response to the Editor's comments (above) we did make changes to the text for all the first round of comments and have subsequently extended these.

Reviewer's Comments (2): The changes they've made need to be checked carefully.

Our response: As detailed in our response to the Editor's comments (above) we have done further careful checking of the manuscript and changed the wording in a number of places.

Reviewer's Comments (3): Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published.

Our response: As detailed in our response to the Editor's comments (above) we have done our best to make English language improvements.

Final comment

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit this manuscript.