

Author's response to reviews

Title: An Examination of Cancer Epidemiology Studies Among Populations Living Close to Toxic Waste Sites

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Dear Dr. Ozonoff:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by Dr. Clapp and yourself regarding our not including studies of the Woburn, Massachusetts, groundwater contamination in our review of waste sites.

We agree that Woburn represents an important environmental contamination, which has been studied by several groups, and has been well publicized.

Our aim was to review studies which examined distinct sites where toxic wastes were dumped. It would be of interest to review studies which examined specifically contaminated water supplies, of which there are several, ranging from arsenic contaminations to agricultural runoff to solvent contaminations deriving from multiple industrial point sources. Woburn would belong to the latter group, with the G and H wells likely having been contaminated by several industrial sources in Woburn, as well as by the Aberjona River. Had there been a distinct dump site, which then contaminated the Woburn wells, we would have included the Woburn studies in our review.

We also agree that some readers may wonder why Woburn was not included, and we added a sentence to clarify following the listing of inclusion criteria:

Selection criteria for inclusion were: 1) the study addressed either cancer incidence or cancer mortality as an endpoint, 2) the study was carried out in a community or a set of communities containing a known hazardous waste site, 3) the study had to address exposure from a specific waste site, rather than exposure from a contaminated water supply which may have resulted from multiple point sources. It is worthy of note that we did not include the well publicized and important groundwater contamination which occurred in Woburn, Massachusetts (where contaminants seeped into the groundwater supply from

several industrial sources, as well as from the Aberjona River), due to this latter criterion.

Thank you for alerting us to the need for this clarification.

Sincerely,

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