

Article details: 2015-0069	
Title	Cancer incidence attributable to tobacco in Alberta, Canada in 2012
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Reviewer 1	Dr. Lawrence Paszat
Institution	Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>The manuscript estimating Alberta cancer incidence attributable to tobacco is could have done more with the CCHS data to illuminate the variability in tobacco use among the populations at risk for cancer, and examined the variability in quantity of tobacco use (it does not examine the variability of the intensity of tobacco exposure or the variability of intensity among subpopulations at risk for cancer). Had it done some, it might have generated hypotheses for how to plan public policies targeted at subpopulations at highest risk. In its present form, it may have some utility as a working document for a public health department or department of health. My suggestion is to present a single manuscript with tobacco and alcohol as examples of the potential use of the protocol, and to use the CCHS data to provide information about subpopulations to target for risk reduction. Some methods and data could be submitted in supplementary materials rather as the main findings.</p> <p>Response: We thank the reviewer for these suggestions. However, the additional analyses that are suggested (exploring the impact of the variability of the intensity of tobacco exposure or variability among sub-populations) are outside the scope of our project. The objective of our work was specifically to estimate the proportion of cancer in the general Alberta population that could be attributed to both active and passive tobacco exposure. We present these estimates for both age- and sex-specific population subgroups. The authors are currently engaged in a larger-scale population attributable risk project for all of Canada that will include this type of modelling of different exposure levels, but it is our view that the exploration of additional subgroups is beyond the scope of the work presented here.</p>
Reviewer 2	Dr. Agnihotram Ramana-Kumar
Institution	Epidemiology and Biostatistics, McGill University, Montréal, Que.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>This paper is very information and useful for the cancer researchers. I suggest few minor comments.</p> <p>1. Page 5 of 25, line 5-6: Suggest ensuring that the discussion of the latency period is consistent with how it is discussed in the methods paper, and therefore reflects the reviewer comments from that same paper. Response: We thank the reviewer for raising this issue both in this paper and the methods paper, and in the methods paper have attempted to clarify our thinking on this subject. We have revised the text of the methods manuscript to include a figure (shown in attached cover letter) illustrating what we refer to as the latent period. Specifically, we consider there to be a theoretical latent period which incorporates both the biologically relevant exposure period (the time between initiation of exposure and the initiation of carcinogenesis) and the induction period (the time between initiation of carcinogenesis and cancer diagnosis), while the measured latent period is the time between exposure measurement and cancer diagnosis. In our work we attempted to quantify the measured latent period, which has subsequently been referred to as simply the "latent period" for simplicity in the remainder of our manuscript and in subsequent manuscripts in this series. Additional language clarifying these considerations with reference to the methods paper has been added to the methods section on p. 4.</p> <p>2. Page 5 of 25, line 42-44: Typo - "less than 100 cigarettes" should read "fewer than 100 cigarettes". Response: This has been changed as suggested.</p> <p>3. Page 6 of 25, line 31-42: The approach used is rather vague from the</p>

description. It would be great to clarify the method as the impact of these assumptions/manipulations may be important.

Response: This section has been revised to attempt to clarify the methods used in determining the number of cancers attributable to active tobacco exposure.

4. Page 6 of 25, line 37-38: Typo - "was applied the age groups" should read "was applied to the age groups".

Response: This has been changed as suggested.

5. Page 12 of 25, line 7-8: Typo - "of smoking in through additional" should read "of smoking through additional".

Response: This has been changed as suggested.