

Letter to the Editor

Erratum to “Mortality Among U.S. Underground Coal Miners: A 23-Year Follow-Up”

ERRATUM

Two errors were reported by the authors of “Mortality Among U.S. Underground Coal Miners: A 23-Year Follow-Up,” published in the AJIM (51:231–245, 2008).

First, the column labels were inadvertently switched for the smoking groups in Table X. The coefficients listed for current smokers actually pertain to ex-smokers and vice versa.

Second, the wrong graph was mistakenly provided for Figure 4. The published Figure 4 and accompanying text pertain to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths instead of nonviolent causes as stated and described in the article. The information presented is correct for COPD, but is wrongly ascribed to nonviolent causes. The correct discussion on nonviolent causes is as follows: The survival curves are shown in the corrected Figure 4. The Cox proportional hazard model predicts 511 deaths from nonviolent causes over the ensuing 24 years among nonsmokers with no coal mine dust exposure, living in the West Appalachian region, and of age 58 at start of follow-up. Prior exposure for 40 years before age 58 at the current U.S. underground coal mine dust standard of 2 mg/m^3 is predicted to lead to 59 extra nonviolent deaths (or 11.5% excess). By reducing the coal mine dust standard to 1 mg/m^3 this excess could be halved (to 5.7% excess). Exposure to 3.75 mg/m^3 for 40 years and having progressive massive fibrosis (PMF) at the start of follow-up is associated with an excess of 180 additional nonviolent deaths (or a 35% greater probability of dying within the 24 years of follow-up compared to those without dust exposure and no PMF).

The authors regret these errors, and hope that these corrections clarify any misunderstanding.

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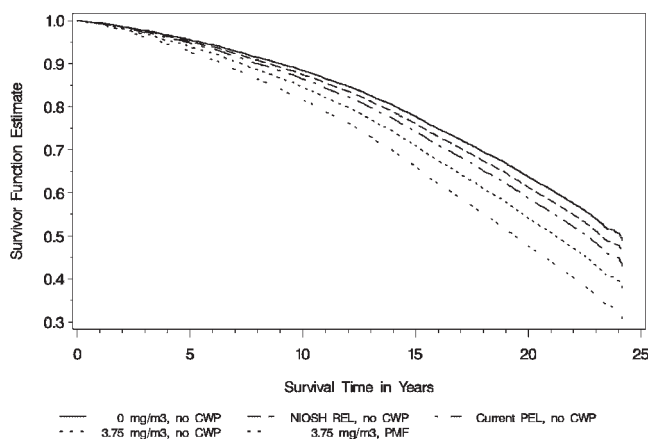


FIGURE 4. Predicted 24-year nonviolent cause survival for nonsmoking, West Appalachian region, coal miners, aged 58 at start of follow-up for those with: no dust exposure; 40 prior years of exposure to respirable coal mine dust at 1 mg/m^3 [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommended exposure limit (REL) (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1995)]; 40 prior years of exposure to the current 2 mg/m^3 [Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) permissible exposure limit (PEL) (30 CFR 70.101 and 71.101; 30 USC 801-962)]; 40 years at 3.75 mg/m^3 (mean concentration for highest dust exposure group in the study); and 40 years at 3.75 mg/m^3 with progressive massive fibrosis (PMF) at the start of follow-up. All groups but the latter are assumed to have no coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP).

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

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