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Radon Risks

We were delighted to have our article, "Effects of Residential Mobility on Individual versus Population Risk of Radon-Related Lung Cancer," published in the December issue of *EHP* (103:1144–1149). In light of two problems, however, we thought you might appreciate the following feedback.

The first problem is relatively minor: we found two typos in equations. In the second equation on p. 1145, the subscript on *Pop* in the second term after the equals sign should be *i*, not *j*. Also, all-capital letters for variable names were changed to lowercase letters. Thus, our "LOG" became "log" except for the last term in the first equation on p. 1145, where it is "Log." (We doubt the latter will cause any confusion.)

The second problem we consider more serious. The summary of our article on the "In This Issue" page (p. 1076)—never shown to us before publication—is factually incorrect. Our article reports that although the *population* risk of radon is likely to be as previously reported, the risk faced by *individuals* currently living at high radon exposures is much less than implied by the work of the EPA due to the effects of residential mobility. We took great pains to explain this quite clearly in the article. The summary states, however, that "Warner et al. report that estimates of radon-related lung cancer risks are lower than originally thought when residential mobility is taken into account," not distinguishing between population and individual risk. The summary continues, incorrectly, that "Because most people move about 10 times during their lives, potential exposure in the 7% of homes with elevated radon is actually well below levels that would result in elevated risks for lung cancer." The exposure in those *homes* is precisely what the EPA says it is, and the cumulative *population* risk of lung cancer associated with people living at those homes is, collectively, exactly what the EPA estimates (assuming the BEIR IV model is correct, as we do). The point is that *individuals currently* living in such homes will have a lower risk because they will move frequently throughought their lives and hence will live at lower levels of exposure most or all their years. As a consequence, as we explain the the paper, the distribution of individuals' lifetime exposures is much more tightly concentrated about the mean than is the distribution of exposures in homes per se.

We suggest that the "In This Issue" summaries be approved and edited, as needed, by the authors. The summary of our paper is wrong and misleading. We haven't yet heard from anyone confused by this, but we are disappointed and concerned.

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Erratum and Response

We apologize for any confusion that might arise as a result of the "In This Issue" summary of the paper by Dr. Warner and his co-workers. We also apologize for the typographical errors that appeared in the paper. The correct equations are:

$$\log(M_{ij}) = -15.50 + 0.92\log(Pop_i) + 0.87 \log(Pop_j) - 0.52\log(Dist_{ij})$$

if *i* and *j* are not contiguous states, and

$$\log(M_{ij}) = -3.09 + 0.47\log(Pop_i) + 0.50 \log(Pop_j) - 0.31\log(Dist_{ij})$$