Estimating the high-arsenic domestic-well population in the conterminous United States

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Supporting Information

16 pages 3 figures4 tables



## **Table SI\_1. List of potential independent variables for LR model with data-source citations**







## **SI**\_**2 Stacked aquifers analysis**

Many areas of the United States have horizontally layered aquifers where domestic wells may be drilled in an upper layer, such as unconsolidated sand and gravel of glacial or alluvial origin, but can also be drilled in a deeper layer, such as porous bedrock. Although not completely understood, the complex interrelationship between various geochemical and physical factors that control arsenic concentrations in groundwater (Welch and others, 2000) means that water withdrawn from distinct layered aquifers may be characterized by different arsenic concentrations, as was found in northern Pennsylvania (Low and Galeone, 2007). Because all of the potential independent variables examined in the models for this study were based on 2-dimensional representations in space, in areas of multiple layered aquifers, there was considerable potential for the arsenic signal from a relatively high-As aquifer to get diluted by mixing results with the signal from a relatively low-As aquifer.

We addressed this concern by adding a general aquifer field to the dataset for each well. Information for many of the wells that was retrieved from the National Water Information System (NWIS) was entered by USGS hydrologists and included some designation of either aquifer name or aquifer code. Information from five NWIS fields related to aquifers, at times variously or inconsistently populated, was consolidated into the single general aquifer field. About 14% of the wells in our study did not have any information with which to assign a general aquifer and were given the aquifer designation of 'unknown'.

Frequency distributions of wells with As > 10 ug/L in each state were compared by general aquifer (table S2). For each state, the general aquifer with the largest percentage of domestic wells with As > 10 ug/L was flagged as potentially dominant in areas of stacked aquifers. For example, in Arizona, 63% of the wells in the sand and gravel aquifer had As > 10, whereas 33% of wells in the carbonate rock aquifer, 26% of wells in unknown aquifers, and 10% in the bedrock aquifer had As > 10; thus, the sand and gravel aquifer was potentially dominant. In order to designate a general aquifer as potentially dominant for a state, that aquifer needed a minimum of 25 wells and it needed to be a designated (not unknown) aquifer. A dominant general aquifer was not considered for Ohio, even though the distribution of high As concentrations appeared to be greater in the sandstone aquifer than other aquifers (33% in the sandstone compared to 20% of wells in the sand and gravel aquifer), because the six wells in the sandstone aquifer were too few to generate confidence in the sample.

Map layers of bedrock geology and well locations for states with potentially dominant general aquifers were examined in detail in ArcMap to decide whether to take action by removing wells for the regression analysis. For the states in question, at least two maps of well locations overlain onto geology were scrutinized: one map showing wells from the potentially dominant layered aquifer and one or more maps showing wells in each of the subordinate aquifers. The visual snapshots of contrasting well locations from different types of aquifers relative to the underlying geology were used to justify an action for dealing with the potentially layered aquifer situation. The idea was that removal of some well data from input to the regression models, if certain conditions were met, could be justified in order to improve the predictive power of the regression models. Predictive power could be improved because all of the regression variables are based on a 2-dimensional grid (using x and y map locations); the presence of two different populations of the dependent variable (arsenic concentrations GT1 or GT10) from different aquifer layers, where one population has a higher concentration than the other, could result in dilution of the signal in the regression estimation.

Necessary conditions for omitting well records were that wells in the respective state tapped at least 2 different aquifers, wells from at least 2 different aquifers were interspersed throughout some part of the state (i.e. were not in completely distinct geographic areas because then they wouldn't be stacked), and the arsenic concentrations of wells in the different aquifers appeared to be different. Most states had situations with wells that resulted in "no action" or no removal of well records (table S2, right-most column). For example, figure SI\_2\_1 shows the ArcMap plots for the 2 potential layered aquifers in Pennsylvania. The sandstone aquifer (fig. SI\_2\_1a), which has 6 percent of wells with arsenic concentration  $> 10$  ug/L is potentially dominant over the carbonate and sandstone aquifer (fig. SI 2 1b, 3 percent of wells with arsenic concentration > 10 ug/L). However, because wells for these two types of aquifers generally do not overlap, layering is not likely to dilute the regression models, and no action is appropriate. There were 6 types of justification for no action: (1) cases of potentially dominant layered aquifers if the wells in different aquifers were in distinct parts of the state (illustrated with data from Pennsylvania; fig. SI 2 1); (2) there was an insufficient number of wells in one or more of the aquifers to make a difference (seen with data from Connecticut); (3) the distribution of high arsenic concentrations (> 10 ug/L) in the layered aquifers was not different enough to distinguish one aquifer from another (seen with data from Arkansas); (4) the modeled geologic units had similar percentages of wells with > 10 ug/L to eliminate the potential dilution effect of the layered aquifer (seen with data from Kansas); (5) wells in unknown aquifers had higher concentrations of arsenic than wells in named aquifers (seen with data from Washington); or (6) there was only one type of generic aquifer identified for wells in the State (seen with data from South Dakota).

Results from this analysis suggested removal of 208 records for the regression analysis for wells in Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oregon, as described in the "Action and justification" column of table S2. If locations of wells from the potentially dominant aquifer and at least one other aquifer were interspersed within some area of the State, then we assumed the presence of a layered aquifer system in that area. Furthermore, if data from wells in the different layers suggested distinct arsenic populations (that is different percents of arsenic > 10 ug/L), then omission of well records from the subordinate aquifer(s) was justified. For example, using data from Nebraska, wells in the sand and gravel aquifer (fig. SI\_2\_2a) are interspersed in the x-y plane with wells in other aquifers (fig. SI\_2\_2b). Additionally, wells in the sand and gravel aquifer showed a potentially different population of arsenic concentrations > 10 ug/L than wells in other aquifers (table S2; 10 percent for sand and gravel versus 0 percent each for sandstone and unknown aquifers). These conditions justified including the 15 Nebraska well records that were not in the sand and gravel aquifer with the set of wells removed from the original dataset.

A comparison of regression results between the full dataset and the test dataset with these 208 wells removed showed that there are small differences in logistic regression model results when some wells are removed from the dataset via the subordinate aquifer analysis. Differences in classification table results for predictions of As > 1, if present, were all less than 0.3 percent. Differences in classification table results for predictions of As > 10 were slightly more substantial; improvements resulting from removing 208 wells were up to 1 percent for sensitivity, false positives and false negatives at a couple of cutpoints. However, the percent correct did not change by more than 0.1 for any cutpoint, most classification table metrics at most cutpoints shows no improvements, and the c value and the H&L statistic were slightly worse in the model with wells removed. Because these improvements to the logistic regression models are negligible, probably because the adjustment only affected 1 percent of the data, the full dataset was used in all subsequent analyses.



Figure SI\_2\_1. Maps of Pennsylvania with underlying geology showing wells selected from *A*, the sandstone aquifer and *B*, carbonate and sandstone aquifer.



Figure SI\_2\_2. Maps of Nebraska with underlying geology showing wells selected from *A*, the sand and gravel aquifer and *B*, all other aquifers.

**Table SI**\_**2**. Number and percent of wells with high arsenic concentrations by type of aquifer, potentially dominant layered aquifer, and action for layered aquifer situations, by State.

[BDRK, bedrock; CARB & SDST, carbonate and sandstone; CARB, carbonate rock; CRYS, crystalline rock; SD & G, sand and gravel; SDST, sandstone; SemiS, semiconsolidated sand; UNK, unknown, VOLC, volcanic rock; Action and justification column explanations– No action: geology, No action because modeled geologic units eliminate potential dilution effect of layered aquifer; No Action: similar distribution, No action because the arsenic distribution in layered aquifers is similar; No Action: small effect, No action because effect of removing wells would be small; No Action necessary, Not a layered aquifer situation; No Action: unknown, No action because wells in unknown aquifers have higher concentrations than wells in named aquifers; No Action: distinct areas, Not a layered aquifer situation because wells are in different parts of the state.]







<sup>1</sup>Wells in carbonate rock and of unknown aquifer overlap each other more than other aquifers

<sup>2</sup>Wells in sand and gravel and unknown aquifers are interspersed in Tmv group only

## SI\_3. Logistic regression model coefficients and coefficient diagnostics for probability of arsenic > 10 µg/L

[All parameters have 1 degree of freedom; GeoChem, stream sediment geochemistry; SurfGeo, surficial geology; KB, Bedrock geology: King and Beikman; HydrLand, hydrologic landscape regions and variables]





<sup>1</sup>The test statistic testing the null hypothesis that a predictor's regression coefficient is zero, given the other predictor variables are in the model. It is the squared ratio of the estimate to the standard error of the respective predictor.

 $2$ The p-value of the Wald chi-square test statistic.

 $3$ The odds ratio determined by exponentiating the estimate. This is interpreted as: for a one unit change in the predictor variable, the odds ratio for a potitive outcome is expected to change by the respective coefficient, given the other variables in the model are held constant.

SI\_4. Standardized Pearson residuals of the predicted probabilities of arsenic exceeding 10 micrograms per liter in groundwater for the logistic regression model.



## **SI 5. Influence diagnostics for individual observations in logistic model to predict As > 10 µg/L.**

The table below shows some of the influence diagnostic statistics and other information for these potential outliers. Although some observed As concentrations are less than and others are greater than 10, predicted values are all less than 10 µg/L. In general, small predicted values correspond to large observation values and large predicted values correspond to small observation values. That this model outcome is opposite from the expected outcome illustrates why these points might be influential. The three table sections show model results with (A) all values; (B) the 2 most extreme influential cases deleted; and (C) 18 additional influential cases deleted. There is almost no difference in model results, as indicated by information in rows below that begin with 'AIC', between these scenarios.



than or greater (1) than  $10 \mu g/L$