

Review of: "Improving the Integration of Epidemiological Data Into Human Health Risk Assessment: What Risk Assessors Told Us They Want"

Alberto Mantovani¹

¹ Istituto Superiore di Sanità

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article is useful, interesting, sharp, and very well-written; in some points, it is even amusing. Highlighting concrete fields for interdisciplinary dialogue is one real value of the paper.

I have only a few comments:

- It would be worthwhile to know the fields where the interviewed risk assessors worked: pharmaceuticals, food safety, workplace, environment... Availability of epidemiological studies can be very different for these domains. Did the risk assessment field impact the answers' attitudes (pessimistic, realistic) and/or specific suggestions?
- The distribution of risk assessors seems to me highly skewed toward North America. If I am correct, this potential bias should be acknowledged somewhere. Cultural differences do matter.
- Toxicology is evoked toward the end of the manuscript, in the framework of the added value of multidisciplinarity. Indeed, toxicologists have a more specific and practical role, in one pivotal aspect: "biological plausibility." This relates to both interpretation of results and methodology (e.g., appropriateness of biomarkers selected; by the way, biomarkers inform on exposure, but can also predict adverse effects, e.g., red blood cell cholinesterase inhibition). The author should consider highlighting more this specific and important role, if risk assessors did so, and even more if risk assessors did not.
- Lastly, epidemiological studies can be important when they are available in a substantial amount, e.g., for occupational exposures, widespread pollutants like dioxins or lead. What about the majority of the risk assessment domain: any consideration by the authors?