

Review of: "Crude Oil Spills and Respiratory Health of Clean-up Workers: A Systematic Review of Literature"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I commend the authors for a good job done in producing this literature review. Other reviewers have given good feedback so I will try not to be repetitive. Some suggestions I have are noted below:

Introduction

A few more references could add more valuable information to the background on crude oil spills and its health effects.

Some areas need clarification also; What are the 'stressors' clean up workers are exposed to that makes them more vulnerable to RH effects? Are they general, lifestyle, or crude-oil specific also? Is duration of exposure to the toxins a factor in developing RH effects? Since spirometry values e.g. FEV/FVC etc were presented in the results they should be mentioned in the introduction so the lay reader can get some idea of it, what is normal and what is deranged in these values?

Maybe a little more emphasis on the VOCs/PAHs that can cause RH effects will be useful. What are the regulatory exposure limits of these toxins from international regulatory organisations? What quantity of VOCs/PAHs will likely cause RH effects and derangement in FEV/FVC? How do they do it (Some toxicokinetics?)

Results

Categorising the results based on spill locations takes away from the main focus of respiratory health issues as the objective. Find a common way to group the RH effects described in the articles and use that to present the results instead. Also, were VOCs/PAHs measured at the sites to know if workers had inhalational exposure to toxic limits? Or is there even a safe limit?

Overall

Avoid vague terms e.g. "A lot of health concerns were raised among residents and workers" – What constitutes 'a lot'? Maintain a connection thread between all the sections, from introduction to conclusion.