



Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Louisa Flander to: Rosemary [REDACTED]
Cc: "Tanyth.deGooye [REDACTED]", Dallas English

26/09/2014 04:30 PM

History: This message has been replied to.

Hi Rosemary

Attached is our Final (2) Report.

We have amended this report in line with your suggestions about clarity and definitions, in consideration of the target readership.

We have included as well a revision to the linear regression analysis, to highlight the Morwell postcode observations that demonstrate the inconclusive nature of the LV mortality data.

Additionally, we have removed the SMR analysis, as this does not add anything to the overall picture, and is less robust as there were no appropriate denominators to use for the analysis.

Kind regards
Louisa

Dr Louisa Flander

[REDACTED]
Senior Research Fellow,
Centre for Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Melbourne School of Population & Global Health,
Room 321/207 Bouverie Street
The University of Melbourne VIC 3010 Australia

[REDACTED] r Lou

On 25/09/2014 8:29 am, "[Rosemary.Leste \[REDACTED\]](#)" <
[Rosemary.Leste \[REDACTED\]](#)> wrote:

That's fine thanks Louisa

Rosemary

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Dr Rosemary Lester PSM

Chief Health Officer
Health Protection Branch
Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

[Redacted]

w. www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/

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| Louisa Flander [Redacted] |
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| To: |
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| "Rosemary.Lester [Redacted] [Redacted]" |
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| "Tanyth.deGooye [Redacted]" |
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 |24/09/2014 07:01
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Subject:
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Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data
for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood
coal mine fire in
 Morwell |
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Dear Rosemary
 These are useful additions and clarifications to the report,
 We'll make these amendments and get them to you by COB Friday if that is ok
 with you,
 Kind regards
 Louisa

On 24 Sep 2014, at 5:06 pm, "[Rosemary.Leste](#) [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Louisa,

Thank you again for providing the deaths data analysis. I would like to
 clarify a couple of points with you before we finalise this report. I
 have
 decided to do this by email rather than meet as I am running out of time
 before I go on leave! I have discussed with colleagues in here, and have
 the following additional requests:

Table 2:

- in a previous email to me you indicated that analysis for exposure when
 defined as 'Feb/March 2014, Jan/April/May/June verses all other months'
 was
 not included in this table as any comparisons were not significant. For
 completeness, would it be possible to include this information in Table 2
 please ?

- Given the potential for a wider audience for this document, I feel there would be some benefit in including additional information about the p-values and a definition of the level of significance used as a footnote to this table. If appropriate, this could also be mentioned in the section of the text which refers to Table 2 and mentions "the evidence is weak".

Figure 1 and 2:

- could you please incorporate a legend for each of these figures (and footnotes if required, including detail in relation to calculation of the confidence intervals)
- the title for Figure 1 refers to exact 95% confidence intervals, while this is not reflected in the title for Figure 2

Aggregation of data by postcode:

As the analysis (as indicated in each of the tables and figures) is based on deaths data aggregated across postcode rather than looking at individual postcodes, could you include some statement regarding the rationale for this in the report text please?

Given this information will be published on the Department's website, I would like to request that you include a small section at the end of the document which includes some key definitions for terms such as "excess deaths" and "standardised mortality ratios",

Many thanks again for your patience with this.

Regards

Rosemary

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to file:

pic14215.jpg)

Dr Rosemary Lester PSM

Chief Health Officer

Health Protection Branch

Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

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[REDACTED]
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w. www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/

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| From: |
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| Louisa Flander [REDACTED]
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| To: |
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| "[Rosemary.Lester](#) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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|Dallas English [REDACTED], Terry Nolan
[REDACTED]

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|23/09/2014 06:51 PM
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|Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria
(BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood

|
|coal mine fire in Morwell
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No worries Rosemary,
Louisa

On 23/09/2014 5:10 pm, "[Rosemary.Leste](#) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] wrote:

Thanks Louisa

I might need to make a time to come down and go through this - will get back to you.

Regards

Rosemary

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to file:

pic31756.jpg)

Dr Rosemary Lester PSM

Chief Health Officer

Health Protection Branch

Department of Health

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

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[w.www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefhealthofficer/)

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| From: |
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|Louisa Flander [REDACTED]
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|To: |
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|"[Rosemary.Lester](#) [REDACTED]
|[REDACTED]
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|Cc: |
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|Terry Nolan [REDACTED] Dallas English
|[REDACTED]
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| Date: |
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|23/09/2014 02:10 PM
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|Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria
|(BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the
|Hazelwood |
|coal mine fire in Morwell
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Here's the word.doc
Louisa

On 23/09/2014 2:04 pm, "[Rosemary.Leste](#) [REDACTED]"
[REDACTED] wrote:

Thanks Louisa - unfortunately having trouble opening this on my iPad so will get back to you later when I'm back in the office.

Regards Rosemary

Sent from my iPad

On 23/09/2014, at 1:30 PM, Louisa Flander [REDACTED]
wrote:

Hi Rosemary,

I have made those corrections you noted; and taken out the reference to denominator values, as we did not use any population denominators in the analysis. Thanks for picking up those errors.

The linear regression was performed with the three CE exposures¹ listed; the third one was to check if the 2014 fire months and/or the 2014 non-fire months differed significantly from all other months. They did not differ significantly so results are not listed in Table 2.

Let me know if this or anything else should be corrected,

I have attached the corrected final report,

Kind regards

Louisa

Dr Louisa Flander

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Senior Research Fellow,
Centre for Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Melbourne School of Population & Global Health,
Room 321/207 Bouverie Street
The University of Melbourne VIC 3010 Australia
[REDACTED]

From:

"[Rosemary.Lester](#) [redacted] <

[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted]

Date: Tuesday, 23 September 2014 12:56 pm

To: Louisa Flander

[redacted]

Cc: Terry Nolan

[redacted] Dallas

English

[redacted]

Subject: Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Thanks Louisa

The labelling of the four aggregated postcodes as "Morwell" postcodes is not correct - the postcodes are 3840 Morwell, 3842 Churchill, 3825 Moe and 3844 Traralgon. So the labelling should be something like "Latrobe Valley postcodes" . So the denominator population of 14,000 only relates to the 3840 postcode.

One of the things which gives us comfort that this is nothing more than random variation is the the increase was greatest in the Moe postcode which is 13 km away from the fire.

Also, in the methods you mention an analysis for Jan, April, May and June as well as Feb-Mar and the whole Jan-June. Which part of the analysis refers to this?

Regards Rosemary
Sent from my iPad

On 23/09/2014, at 11:36 AM, Louisa Flander

[redacted] wrote:

Hi Rosemary

I have attached the final report as pdf document, so you can see the graphs.

I am not sure what to say about the Barnett analysis, other than that the statistical solution is appropriate and more nuanced than ours, as he included the seasonal influence of temperature in one model.

It is important to note that his result is not different from ours (an extra 1.8 deaths per month per postcode for 2014 compared to 2009-13). And, importantly, his results demonstrate the extremely wide confidence intervals that we show as well.

So, we can say that after applying different statistical interpretations of these data we can see an increase in the number of deaths for 2014 over the previous five years, but we cannot conclude that this increase is due to any specific cause in 2014.

Kind regards
Louisa

Dr Louisa Flander

[Redacted]

Senior Research Fellow,
Centre for Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Melbourne School of Population & Global Health,
Room 321/207 Bouverie Street
The University of Melbourne VIC 3010 Australia

[Redacted]

From:
"Rosemary" [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Date: Tuesday, 23 September 2014 11:00 am

To: Louisa Flander
[REDACTED]

Cc: Terry Nolan [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Thanks Louisa

Figures 1 and 2 have no content - I presume that this is because they are yet to come rather than a quirk of my iPad? (I have not actually been in the office since Friday).

Also, would it be possible (separately) to comment on the appropriateness of the analysis done by Barnett?

Regards Rosemary

Sent from my iPad

On 19/09/2014, at 2:59 PM, Louisa Flander

[REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Rosemary

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important analysis.

We have attached our Preliminary Assessment of the BDMV mortality data for Latrobe Valley, 2009-14.

This assessment reviews the data provided, and shows several ways of demonstrating the small increase in Morwell deaths in 2014, compared to 2009-13.

We do not find this increase to be conclusive evidence of any particular effect, given the very wide confidence intervals around the data, and the lack of useful denominators to compare health events in these postcodes.

Thank you for providing the analysis done by QUT. We have not commented on this analysis in our assessment, and we have not performed any comparable adjustments for environmental effects; rather we have looked only at the BDMV data provided, as per the Project Brief.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions for completing the Final Assessment,

Kind regards
Louisa

Dr Louisa Flander

[Redacted]

Senior Research Fellow,
Centre for Epidemiology & Biostatistics
Melbourne School of Population & Global Health,
Room 321/207 Bouverie Street
The University of Melbourne VIC 3010 Australia

[Redacted]

From: Terry Nolan

[Redacted]

Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2014 4:52 pm

To:

"[Rosemary.Lester](#)" [Redacted]

[Redacted]

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au>>

Cc:

"[Vikki.Lynch](#)" [Redacted]

Nancy Palamara [Redacted]

"[Sherine.Azoor](#)" [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

, Rebecca Bond [Redacted]
Louisa Flander

[REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Dear Rosemary

Will do.

Terry

From: Rosemary Lester

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2014 4:49 pm

To: Terry Nolan [REDACTED]

Cc:

"[Vikki.Lynch](#) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Nancy Palamara [REDACTED]

"[Sherine.Azoo](#) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
, Rebecca Bond [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Thanks Terry

Yes, please proceed on the basis of your attached documents.

Regards Rosemary

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Sep 2014, at 2:08 pm, Terry Nolan

[REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Rosemary

Attached is a response to your request for a review of the death data.
Please let us know if you would like to proceed.

Regards

Terry

Professor Terry Nolan AO PhD FRACP FAFPHM
Head | Melbourne School of Population and Global Health
The University of Melbourne | Victoria 3010 | AUSTRALIA

[Redacted]
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From:

[Redacted]
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[Redacted]
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[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Date: Tuesday, 16 September 2014 11:07 am

To: Terry Nolan [Redacted]

Cc:

"[Vikki.Lynch](#)" [Redacted],
[Redacted]

Rosemary Lester

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"[Sherine.Azoor](#)" [Redacted]
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Subject: Final project brief - Review of Birth Deaths & Marriages Victoria (BDMV) mortality data for the Latrobe Valley and the time of the Hazelwood coal mine fire in Morwell

Dear Terry

As discussed, please find attached a project brief for a quick review of death data in the La Trobe Valley. Please let me know if you are willing/able to do this and provide me with a quote.

Best wishes

Rosemary

(1) Rapid Health Risk Assessment - 12 March 2014:

1.

(2) Dataset provided to the Department by Births Deaths & Marriages Victoria:

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<UoM budget HealthDeptVic 160914.xlsx>
<Response to Project brief for Death data Review 160914.docx>

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<Final Report BDMV mortality review 160914_draft.pdf>

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<final report bdmv mortality review 160914_final.pdf>

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[attachment "Final Report BDMV mortality review 160914_final.docx" deleted
by Rosemary Lester/HeadOffice/DHS]

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- Final Report BDMV mortality review 160914_final_2.pdf