

Comments on the paper titled “Arsenic in drinking water: not just a problem of Bangladesh” by Dr. A. B. Gupta, Professor of Civil (Environmental) Engineering, MNIT Jaipur, India.

The paper is very topical and forewarns about the possible implications of any adverse health effects that can be conceived in future in Europe due to relatively liberal standards for this toxic metal in drinking water compared to those of other countries. The concept has been brought out well as to the existence of stricter standards in countries like Australia ( $7 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ ), US NRDC ( $3 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ ), Denmark ( $5 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ ) etc. compared to the European guidelines of  $10 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$  can result in problems as even these standards are not based on the acceptable safety factor of 1 in 100000 for lifetime cancer risk. However, the argument is not supported by enough evidence desired for such a review, especially when the economic implications of adopting stricter standards can be huge. Ideally the paper should contain some more information on the following lines:

1. The population for which the risk estimates are given has been derived from US references (EPA, 1998; NRDC, 2000). Similar data from other countries especially from Bangladesh and India- two of the most affected countries with arsenicosis, can add a greater fillip to the argument that the existing standards have not been able to cover the cancer risk adequately. Commentaries on WHO guidelines may help derive such information.
2. Any sporadic reports of arsenicosis from European countries should also be included in the reference to indicate the urgency of modifying the standards.

Two specific corrections in Sub head 2 (Arsenic in water: a worldwide problem) are required to be made:

- i) Figure 1 shows a reference Appleyard et al. (2006), the details of which are not available in the reference list.
- ii) A reference is missing from the text of the second paragraph, line 4, which reads “Error! Reference source not found”. It should be suitably rectified.

The paper is acceptable after aforementioned information is added to make it more effective.