

## Cottingham Audio Combined Transcript

“We think that this is the first study where we have looked at exposure to arsenic via food after first accounting for exposure via water using long-term biomarkers of exposure. So what we did is we looked at arsenic in toenail clippings which is an easy to obtain sample and those integrated into arsenic exposure over periods of weeks to months at some point in the past depending on how fast toenails grow. We looked at the arsenic in those toenail clippings and we compared it to how much arsenic is in people’s drinking water and also to their consumption of particular foods one at a time over the last year. So we’re looking at a very integrated measure of exposure versus diet over a long period of time. What we found is that after accounting for water exposure, there are certain foods that seem to be relatively strongly associated with that toenail arsenic and those foods are both beer and white wine and also Brussels sprouts and certain kinds of dark meat fish.

From a public health perspective, I think this shows that dietary sources of arsenic are likely to be important in our diets and that this is another argument for eating a well-balanced, healthy diet that doesn’t rely too strongly on any one source of food. So I think it’s fine to have some of these high arsenic foods as part of your diet, you just don’t want to have them every day or multiple times a day. They’re what I call sometimes foods with my kids. So that’s the public health angle. On the science angle, I think that it’s pretty clear now that food is likely to be a key source of exposure and what I see as the next step is that we need to start looking at the potential consequences of this exposure. When I talk about this work, we’re just showing associations between arsenic in toenails and what people eat and we’re not saying well does it matter — what are the consequences of consuming these foods — and that’s really where I think the science needs to go next.”