

# Letters

## Wind farms and health: who is fomenting community anxieties?

**TO THE EDITOR:** By his deployment of ad hominem arguments, outdated or industry-sponsored research, comparison to an unrelated phenomenon, and a biased selection of case studies and research reports, I fear the pro-wind-industry opinions expressed by Chapman<sup>1</sup> will only serve to exacerbate the psychogenic and sociogenic processes he laments.

Wind turbine noise must be treated like any other source of community noise, and its association with renewable energy must not excuse it from public health guidelines. The emergence of large wind turbines clustered close together in “wind farms” can produce modulated noise exceeding 100 decibels in their immediate vicinity.<sup>2</sup> Such exposure will seriously impact health through sleep disturbance and noise-induced stress.

The issue, then, is to determine reasonable distances from human habitation and noise guidelines, such as those for airports, drinking establishments and motorways. There are no current data indicating that wind-turbine noise is privileged in relation to health impacts. Rather, data not acknowledged by Chapman suggest the opposite.<sup>2-5</sup> Indeed, the only mass hysteria I see comes from wind-farm activists who have an aversion to data and a love of conspiracy theories and voodoo. As a public health researcher, I appeal for more data and less opinion.

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**1** Chapman, S. Wind farms and health: who is fomenting community anxieties? *Med J Aust* 2011; 195: 495.

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