



From: **Siddhartha Roy** <sidroy@vt.edu>
Date: Sat, Sep 19, 2020 at 11:43 AM
Subject: Flint tweet
To: <patrickhayes13@protonmail.com>

Dear Mr. Hayes,

I do not know why you are asking me about a research award that Marc gives to admirable people he has worked closely with. From what I understand, his rationale is the following: alchemists' have tried to convert lead to gold over centuries but failed, but something good came out of a disaster like Flint because of the efforts of so many brave people. This has led him to bestowing it to colleagues, including the heroic Ms. LeeAnne Walters and the amazing Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha who were one of the first recipients of the award in late 2015/early 2016. That sounds admirable to me. What do you think?

Here is LeeAnne getting the award and the reasoning:
<https://youtu.be/AVHE5ny0MBg?t=3639>

The person you are attacking in that photo on Twitter led much of the microbial analyses that first showed high levels of legionella in Flint buildings in 2016 and her papers are being used in lawsuits. Here are a few of her brilliant studies:

- 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6810188/>
- 2) <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acs.est.7b01589>
- 3) <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.estlett.6b00192>

I think because of her crucial work that has served Flint residents, she is extremely deserving of the lead to gold award. Would you disagree?

From what I gather from your Twitter page, you are mad at our Undark op-ed (<https://undark.org/2020/09/17/flint-water-crisis-sewage/>) and the two scientific studies underpinning our findings.

Our key finding about the lead levels spiking hugely in summer 2014 and the dropping in Flint (hence, the reasoning that the crisis was a disaster and criminal, but contrary to speculation that lead levels got progressively worse over the crisis' 18 months as first feared) was already published in our 2019 study and written up in an MLive article (<https://www.mlive.com/news/flint/2019/05/researchers-say-sewage-data-holds-clues-to-flint-water-crisis.html>) and a Mother Jones piece (<https://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2019/05/a-brand-new-look-at-lead-contamination-in-flint/>) last year. In fact, Kettering's Dr. Ben Pauli quoted it in his paper earlier this year: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wat2.1420>. Most of what is in the op-ed is not new information.

If you have already read our scientific work (the 2 papers and the op-ed) and the precise wording, my apologies in laying this out for you again.

Kind regards,
Sid

From: **Patrick Hayes** <XXX@protonmail.com>
Date: Sat, Sep 19, 2020 at 1:32 PM
Subject: Re: Flint tweet
To: Siddhartha Roy <sidroy@vt.edu>

I'm not going to offer any critique of your research, because I'm not qualified to do so and that's not even the point. Couple of things:

- When you're doing research in a community that was lead poisoned or "lead exposed" because of a government decision, then you receive significant grants and funding and resources to support those studies, then you call a research award the "golden lead award" that's easily avoidable bad optics at best and and smug, head-up-your-ass, ivory tower intellectualism that knows it's bad optics and doesn't care at worst. So your little history lessons about alchemists is adorably condescending, and also leads me to believe it was the latter in this instance.

- As for the articles, again, I'm not qualified to critique the research or your findings. My only point is this: I would never want to be the person parsing language to soften it when actual people have suffered and continue to suffer. Who benefits from "lead exposed" rather than "lead poisoned" becoming the accepted nomenclature after the fact? The same powerful people who caused it, right? History is full of examples of academics, journalists, and other influencers softening language in ways that let the powerful off the hook. Someone once had the brilliant idea to start calling "civilian casualties" in war "collateral damage" right? I'm sure there was probably sound reasoning supporting that too.

In the longrun, you might very well be right. The number of people actually poisoned by the water might be lower than feared. But really, what does that matter? Was there not a ruinous effect on the community here that goes far beyond lead? Did the government not inflict harm on this community and then try to cover it up or downplay it? Have schools, community organizations, health providers, and other snot had to dramatically shift operations to manage and mitigate whatever the impact is long-term? Have people who have had to replace appliances that were ruined by the water, install filters, or make other changes to their daily lives not financially impacted in ways the settlement that was just released don't even address? Are residents here not still dealing with disastrous mental health ramifications and an understandable reluctance to trust institutions (like ... uh ... academia, for example) who are telling them water is safe just like those same institutions were in 2015?

So I'm not questioning your research, your methods, your findings, anything like that. I'm questioning your sensitivity.

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Patrick Hayes

[Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Website](#)

From: **Siddhartha Roy** <sidroy@vt.edu>
Date: Sat, Sep 19, 2020 at 2:35 PM
Subject: Re: Flint tweet
To: Patrick Hayes <XXX@protonmail.com>

Can you specifically point out which line in our op-ed was insensitive? Thank you.

From: **Siddhartha Roy** <sidroy@vt.edu>
Date: Thu, Sep 24, 2020 at 8:38 PM
Subject: Re: Flint tweet
To: Patrick Hayes <XXX@protonmail.com>

Hi Patrick,

I would very much like to know which part of my op-ed was insensitive. I spent weeks writing it and would like to correct any insensitive comments.

Thanks,
Sid