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Demand for environmental quality information and household response: Evidence from well-water arsenic testing

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8 **Abstract**

9 Access to information about environmental quality may facilitate low-cost preventive mea-
10 sures that protect human health. In this paper, we study the demand for information about
11 environmental quality and the behavioral response to the information provided. With a field ex-
12 periment conducted in Bihar (India), we estimate the price sensitivity of demand for diagnostic
13 testing of drinking water wells for arsenic of natural origin - a serious threat to the health of tens
14 of millions of villagers across South and Southeast Asia. Demand is substantial but sensitive
15 to price; uptake falls from 68% to 31% of households over our price range (Rs. 10 to Rs. 50).
16 We further assess how households respond to information regarding the contamination level in
17 their wells. About one-third of households with unsafe wells switch to a safer water source.
18 Finally, we demonstrate that households that received adverse test outcomes are more likely to
19 selectively forget test results, and proactively remove evidence of their wells' arsenic status.

20 JEL Codes: D12; I12; O12; Q50

21 **Keywords:** *Environmental quality, Information, Willingness to pay, Health, Arsenic, Ground-*
22 *water*

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