Dear Editor:

We have addressed all of the comments provided by the two reviewers. The details can be found in our enclosed responses to the reviewers' comments. For your and the reviewers' convenience in reviewing the changes, a copy of the paper with track-changes is also attached below.

Thank you for taking care of the review process for this paper.

Sincerely,

Leiming Zhang and co-authors

Response to Referee #1

We greatly appreciate the reviewer for pointing out this important issue related to data QA/QC. We will add additional information in the revised paper as detailed below.

Original Comments

This manuscript provides a complete overview of the state of the art in mercury observation. It reports the issues that affect current instruments used to measure mercury speciation and provides recommendations for future research to cope with lack of measures at global level. Advice on passive filtering can be considered as a way to cover missing measures and define a method for designing and developing next observation networks. About observation networks, the document highlights the importance of harmonized observations at global level: information should be comparable between data sources within the same network and between different networks.

Even though the needed for Quality Assurance (QA) is cited in the manuscript, the authors should improve the discussion about data validation process. QA and QC are often presented together even if they are two quite different concepts: QA is related to the process regarding data collection, while QC is applied to the final product of monitoring. As data are often collected in near-real time, the importance for QA/QC system can be crucial in order to improve data quality throughput. In the manuscript only QA is cited. Another important aspect is the storage of data collected by the observation network. The authors cite shared databases, freely released. This is very important to improve knowledge of phenomena and to allow policy makers to make better decisions, but there is a difficulty in sharing data openly and freely to the public. In the manuscript the authors cite SOP to collect the data, but the Data Policy within the observation network should also be treated.

Responses: The following information and additional reference will be included in the revised paper: “Consistent quality control of mercury observations after collection is also necessary for consistent observations within and between operational networks. Among the operating Tekran-based atmospheric networks, both the Canadian Atmospheric Mercury Measurement Network (CAMNet) and the Atmospheric Mercury Network (NADP’s AMNet) in the U.S. both have quality control systems in place and in use. The two systems are reasonably comparable (Steffen et al., 2012), making the two network datasets comparable and usable in combination. In both cases, significant amounts of data are invalidated due to many different causes (e.g. Gay et al, 2013), clearly showing that post measurement quality control is necessary. Additionally, the GMOS network also has a quality control system in place (D'Amore et al., 2015). The GMOS system is based upon both the Canadian and NADP systems, and uses the majority of flags from each system. A strict comparison between the three QC systems has not been completed, but it is at least reasonable to assume that the three systems and resulting data are generally consistent. A full intercomparison of the three systems is called for, but these systems at least provide a basis for a global QC system for all atmospheric observations, which is needed for global modeling using data from all three networks.” Additional reference: D'Amore, F., Bencardino, M., Cinnirella, S., Sprovieri, F., and Pirrone, N.: Data quality through a web-based QA/QC system: implementation for atmospheric mercury data from the Global Mercury Observation System. Environmental Science: Processes & Impacts, 17(8), 1482-1491, 2015.

Finally, many services related to the observation network and data sharing are included in IT infrastructures that pay attention to all data management issues, such as the implementation of data policy, data catalog and interoperability among networks using metadata. See, for example, GEOSS as a system designed to collect data from different observation networks. In session 2.6 may be that a small discussion on these IT systems and data sharing using metadata could be useful.

Responses: The following information will be included in the revised paper: “Each atmospheric network has different data release processes, but one location with a consistent quality assurance and control system, with freely available and timely data would be very valuable for the research community. Perhaps the operating networks will evolve to this combined operation, or perhaps some type of system could be employed, such as GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems, https://www.earthobservations.org/geoss.php), so that a consistent and global dataset would be freely available to all data users.”

Response to Referee #2

We greatly appreciate the helpful comments from the reviewer, which have helped us improve the paper. We have addressed all of the comments carefully, as detailed below. Our responses start with "R:".

General comments

Dr. Leiming Zhang and colleagues have written a thoughtful review of current challenges in the field of atmospheric mercury cycling. The authors discuss research needs, including: improved emission estimates, dry deposition and air-surface exchange, chemical mechanisms, field measurements of speciated mercury, analysis and application of speciated mercury data, and network harmonization. Prior to publication, I recommend the authors condense the discussion of emissions, chemical mechanisms, and speciated measurements. These topics have been written about at length in the literature. It would serve this review better to briefly acknowledge emissions, chemistry, and measurements, but limit the discussion and refer readers to previous work. That would help focus this paper and highlight the authors' newer insights about data applications and network harmonization.

R: We agree with the reviewer that existing literature has extensively discussed some of the topics. This synthesis paper aims to provide a brief summary of the existing knowledge and to also extend to new insights, thus some repetitions are inevitable and we have tried to credit these to the most appropriate references. We feel the majority of materials need to be kept there for the completeness of the paper, as this reviewer also asked to extend some of the discussions that were missed within these topics.

Line-by-line comments

Page 2-3, lines 20-40: Paragraph beginning with, "Current methods for measurement and model interpretation of the three forms of Hg…" This paragraph's purpose is unclear.

R: This synthesis paper is a follow up of a series of review papers published in the ACP special issue mentioned in the previous paragraph. We thus feel it is necessary to give a brief summary of the major contents published in those review papers, which is the purpose of the paragraph.

Page 5, lines 70-76: Discussion about needed improvements to emissions omits anthropogenic releases to freshwater. Since air-surface exchanges can be significant, getting a better handle on releases to water is important for refining our understanding of atmospheric Hg. The first inventory of releases to water was in UNEP [2013], later published in Kocman et al. [2017].

R: The following text has been added in the revised paper: "Anthropogenic releases of Hg to freshwater also need to be better estimated (Liu et al. 2016; Kocman et al., 2017) since Hg in waterbodies can be released into atmosphere through the air-surface exchange processes."

Page 5, lines 78-79: Please clarify how "a global database of GEM flux from different land covers" would improve estimates of natural Hg emissions. Natural emissions are primarily geogenic, so wouldn't we need better estimates from volcanoes, fumaroles, and other geological

features? Land cover alone wouldn't help discriminate between primary natural emissions and secondary (aka legacy) anthropogenic emissions.

R: Natural emissions include those from geogenic sources as well as from reemission of previously deposited mercy. The sentence in the original version of the paper applies more to the latter than the former category. We have clarified the wording as follows: "To improve estimation of mercury emission from natural sources, a global database of GEM flux from different land covers and geogenic sources could be developed."

Page 5, lines 88-89: "Mercury emissions from wildfires is another source that is not well quantified." Please expand the discussion of wildfire emissions to include relevant work from Friedli et al. [2003], Friedli et al. [2009], and explain more specifically what is "not well quantified".

R: We have added this information in the revised paper, which reads: "The emission quantity and speciation of mercury from wildfires are not well characterized due to a general lack of observational data. The data presented in Friedli et al. (2003, 2009) provided preliminary estimates based on aircraft measurement and a satellite constrained bottom-up methodology."

Page 6, line 98: Please quantify, "can constitute significant sources (cf. Eckley et al., 2011)".

R: We have added this information in the revised paper: "For example, Hg emissions from areas surrounding two active gold mines in Nevada were estimated to account for 56% and 14%, respectively, of the overall emissions from each mine (area plus point sources)."

Page 6, lines 112-114: "An important future task will be development of numerical modeling techniques that can estimate long term average emissions fluxes from such concentration variability maps obtained in passive sampling campaigns." The sentence is confusing as worded.

R: The sentence has been revised as: "Development of numerical models that can utilize long-term data obtained from passive samplers over a large spatial coverage for emission source strength estimate will also be an important future task."

Page 7, lines 121-124: "Passive air samplers… for extended periods of time." These two sentences are redundant and could be combined.

R: The first one has been deleted in the revised paper.

Page 7, lines 130-133: This short two-sentence paragraph is confusing. Please consider weaving into the paragraph above.

R: The first sentence has been moved to Section 2.5. The second one has been deleted since this point is elaborated in Section 2.5.

Page 9, line 176-177: What about Australia and the polar regions?

R: Yes, these regions also lack of mercury flux data and have been added in the revised paper.

Page 10, lines 193-196: "Many oxidation reactions currently employed in CTMs...are considered implausible based on kinetic and ab initio thermodynamic equations." Recent work from Horowitz et al. [2017] is relevant here. Horowitz and colleagues, including Ted Dibble, updated the chemistry in the GEOS-Chem chemical transport model specifically to rectify the assertion that what was in CTMs was implausible based on more recent kinetic and thermodynamic studies.

R: This reference was originally cited further down the same paragraph (lines 219-222). A new study (Ye et al., 2017), which was recently submitted, evaluated a regional chemical transport model (CMAQ) modified by implementing a Hg and Br chemical mechanism that included the most up-to-date kinetic data and reactions (Ye et al., 2016) and constrained by an observed vertical profile of BrO. They found that the modified CMAQ-Hg could capture significantly greater seasonal and diurnal variations that the default version failed to do and simulate Hg wet and dry deposition in better agreement with observations or observation-based estimates. Nevertheless, modeling studies like these currently remain few and far between, and this review is intended to promote applications of cutting-edge kinetic research findings in atmospheric Hg chemical transport modeling as Horowitz et al. (2017) and Ye et al. (2017) did.

Pages 11-12, lines 229-236: These research needs have been stated in previous reviews. Please revise to highlight the new aspects of the discussion, or consider deleting from the paper, or significantly condensing and citing previous work (e.g., Gustin et al. [2015]).

R: For a completeness of the paper, we tend to choose the last approach recommended by this reviewer, which is condensing and citing previous work. However, these points are already in the very condensed form with only five short bullets and could not be condensed further. We thus have added more references on these points.

Page 13, lines 260-262: "Existing GOM measurement methods are biases, and new methods under development may also exhibit bias, at least under some conditions." This statement feels obvious. I recommend deleting.

R: Deleted in the revised paper.

Page 16, lines 339-342: "Results generated from these analyses… highly empirically parameterized natural sources." The sentence is confusing as worded.

R: As explained in detail in Cheng et al. (2015a), there are two types of models studying the source-receptor relationships of speciated atmospheric Hg. One type of study is chemical transport modelling, which predicts speciated atmospheric Hg concentrations on regional and global scales based on the knowledge of source emissions, atmospheric dispersion and transport, and chemical and physical atmospheric processes. Another type is receptor-based methods. In this type of study, receptor measurements (e.g., air concentrations, precipitation concentrations, or wet deposition) and back trajectory modelling are used separately and together to predict pollution sources and estimate the contributions of the sources to receptor measurements.

Receptor-based methods do not require comprehensive knowledge on source emissions and mercury behavior in the atmosphere; therefore, they are less complicated than chemical transport models. Comparing the results from these two types of models have not been done in literature, and such a practice is recommended here. We have revised the sentences to make this point clearer.

Page 17, lines 346-347: "These model simulations should be reassessed using available speciated Hg data…" This is impractical and unproductive. Consider removing the sentence. If the sentence is kept in the paper, please elaborate on what one would hope the reassessment would achieve.

R: Our experiences suggested that such a practice is practical and can be productive. In earlier days when mercury CTMs were first developed, there were very limited speciated mercury data. Thus, most mercury CTMs were only compared and evaluated using monitored mercury wet deposition data. The first comprehensive comparison of CTMs model outputs with speciated data was done for the Canada-US Greta Lakes mercury project (Zhang et al., 2012), in which modeled surface layer oxidized mercury (GOM and PBM) were found to be a factor of 2-20 higher than the monitored data collected in eastern North America. This directly led to another study identifying the potential causes of such large discrepancies (Kos et al., 2013), and more studies on the same topic (Cheng and Zhang, 2017). We thus recommend such comparison to be done in different model framework (e.g., Bieser et al., 2014),) and in different region of the world (e.g., Asia) where GOM and PBM levels are different from those in North America.

Page 18, lines 369-377: Several papers have been published that have explored the hypotheses listed. Y. Zhang et al. [2016] determined changes in atmospheric Hg could in large part be explained by changes in anthropogenic emissions. Parrella et al. [2013] examined changes in marine boundary layer halogen chemistry and based on their work we can exclude this hypothesis as an explanation. Amos et al. [2014] excluded changes in riverine and wastewater discharges as an explanation.

R: Such information and references have been incorporated in the revised paper, which reads: "For example, changes in anthropogenic emissions likely played a major role in the changes of atmospheric Hg (Zhang et al., 2016), while changes in marine boundary layer halogen chemistry (Parrella et al., 2012) and in riverine and wastewater discharges (Amos et al., 2014) were found to have little impact on mercury trends."

References

R: References provided have all been included in the revised paper.

A synthesis of research needs for improving the understanding of atmospheric mercury cycling

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Abstract: This synthesis identifies future research needs in atmospheric mercury science, based on a series of review papers, as well as recent developments in field data collection, modeling analysis, and emission assessments of speciated atmospheric mercury. Research activities are proposed that focus on areas that we consider important. These include refinement of mercury emission estimations, quantification of dry deposition and air-surface exchange, improvement of the treatment of chemical mechanisms in chemical transport models, increase in the accuracy of oxidized mercury measurements, better interpretation of atmospheric mercury chemistry data, and harmonization of network operation. Knowledge gained in these research areas will significantly improve our understanding of atmospheric cycling from local to global scales.

1. Introduction

Knowledge of atmospheric mercury (Hg) cycling processes and accurate mass balances on local, regional, and global scales is needed to assess Hg impacts on humans, animals, and ecosystems, and to establish Hg emission control policies. A series of review papers, published in a special issue of Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics (http://www.atmos-chem-phys.net/special_issue377.html), summarize the knowledge gained from decades of research on atmospheric Hg, operationally defined as gaseous elemental Hg (GEM), gaseous oxidized Hg (GOM), and particulate bound Hg (PBM).

Current methods for measurement and model interpretation of the three forms of Hg in the atmosphere were reviewed in Gustin et al. (2015). They revealed potential large measurement uncertainties and associated important implications for refining existing measurement methods, model-measurement comparisons, model development, and trend analysis. Sampler designs for

passive GEM sampling were reviewed in McLagan et al. (2016), and the suitability of these devices for measuring high and low GEM concentrations was identified. Mercury transformation mechanisms and speciation profiles for Hg formed in and released from flue gases of coal-fired boilers, non-ferrous metal smelters, cement plants, iron and steel plants, waste incinerators, and biomass burning were documented in Zhang et al. (2016a). Worldwide measurements of Hg spanning the past four decades were reviewed in Mao et al. (2016) together with the mechanisms driving the observed spatiotemporal variations of speciated Hg in various environments including oceans, continents, high elevation, the free troposphere, and low to high latitudes. Current knowledge of Hg dry deposition was reviewed in Wright et al. (2016), including dry deposition algorithms used in chemical transport models and at monitoring sites, measurement methods and quantification of dry deposition of oxidized Hg, and Hg in litterfall and throughfall. The same study also explored the geographical variations of Hg deposition as well as the relative importance of dry and wet deposition. A global observational flux database of the atmosphere-surface exchange of GEM was developed and the implication of the flux data to global Hg budgets was discussed in Zhu et al. (2016). Receptor-based source apportionment studies using speciated Hg were summarized in Cheng et al. (2015a), and studies related to speciated Hg in China were reviewed in Fu et al. (2015).

Recommendations for future research needs based on the aforementioned review articles are summarized below, and the discussion here is extended further to include topics not included in the special issue, but closely linked to the understanding of atmospheric Hg cycling. This synthesis is not aimed to cover all research needs of atmospheric Hg, but to provide directions guiding future research. Other recommendations and knowledge gaps can also be found in a

recent mercury science assessment conducted in Canada which summarized scientific findings from research undertaken in the past 20 years focusing on the Canadian environment (ECCC, 2017).

2. Recommendations

2.1 Mercury emission

Emission inventories used in chemical transport models (CTMs) are prepared using known anthropogenic sources and highly empirically parameterized natural sources. Existing emission inventories are thought to be relatively accurate for anthropogenic emission source categories such as energy and industrial sectors in the United States and Europe, but with large uncertainties for other anthropogenic sources, and even larger uncertainties for natural sources and reemission estimation (Pacyna et al., 2016).

To improve estimation of mercury emission from anthropogenic sources, several measurement studies are recommended (Pacyna et al., 2016; UNEP, 2013; Zhang et al., 2016a). These include (1) measurements of mercury behavior across newly employed air pollution control devices (APCDs), e.g., wet electrostatic precipitators (WESP) for coal-fired power plants, flue gas desulfurization (FGD) systems, and novel mercury reclaiming towers (MRT) for non-ferrous metal smelters; (2) continuous measurements of mercury transformation and speciation under different operational conditions, e.g., raw mill on/off modes and the whole cycle of fly ash circulations in cement plants; (3) measurements of mercury transformation and speciation in flue gases from sources (e.g., iron and steel plants, waste incinerators) and assessing the influence of raw materials on mercury transformation and speciation; (4) continuous measurements of

mercury emission from sources with large fluctuation (e.g., waste incinerators, crematories), which can be achieved through mercury flow analysis and statistical methods for the inventory developments of these sources; (5) measurements of mercury emission factors and speciation of potential large sources, e.g., mobile oil combustion, reutilization of by-products (e.g., fly ash, waste acid), which will become potential large sources once mercury emissions from current dominant sources are controlled; and (6) mercury emission from artisanal and small scale gold mining activities in developing countries, a source category that has been poorly characterized. Anthropogenic releases of Hg to freshwater also need to be better estimated (Liu et al. 2016; Kocman et al., 2017; UNEP, 2013) since Hg in waterbodies can be released into atmosphere through the air-surface exchange processes.

Natural emissions include those from geogenic sources as well as from reemission of previously deposited mercury. To improve estimation of mercury emission from natural sources, a global database of GEM flux from different land covers and geogenic sources could be developed, similar to those done by Erikson et al. (2006) and Hartman et al. (2009). Another way to approach this would be to do a literature review and compile papers that have identified dominant mechanisms and developed algorithms that can be applied in models (Eckley et al., 2011, 2016; Hartman et al., 2009;). Dominating factors include soil concentration of Hg, solar radiation, temperature, soil moisture, and precipitation (Briggs et al., 2013). GEM evasion from the sea surface is an important source (Pacyna et al., 2016), and air-sea Hg flux could be modeled using parameters (e.g., temperature, wind speed) known to influence this exchange. It is important to note that there is little work on GOM flux from any surface due to analytical challenges associated with detecting ultra-trace quantity of GOM at sufficiently high temporal

resolution. ~~Mercury emission from wildfires is another source that is not well quantified.~~ The emission quantity and speciation of Hg from wildfires are not well characterized due to a general lack of observational data (Webster et al., 2016). The data presented in Friedli et al. (2003, 2009) provided preliminary estimates based on aircraft measurement and a satellite constrained bottom-up methodology. ~~However, l~~Limited investigations have suggested that the emission speciation is primarily GEM, and the emission quantity can be modeled based on the Hg content in different parts of tree biomass. It may also be investigated through plume or receptor measurement and modeling analysis. Mercury emission from geogenic sources such as geothermal activities, volcanic eruptions, and plate tectonic movements needs to be better quantified.

Estimation of emissions from area sources, e.g. urban areas, natural sources, and large contaminated sites such as abandoned mercury mines or artisanal gold mining operations, is important for these can constitute significant sources. For example area emissions were shown to be similar to stack emissions at a Nevada gold mine (~~cf.~~ Eckley et al., 2011). Methods for the identification, localization, and characterization of such mercury sources to the atmosphere are required to support efforts to further reduce mercury emissions globally. Once identified and substrate concentrations and meteorological conditions are known for contaminated areas, previously developed algorithms or models could be used to refine the emission estimates and then evaluated with field measurements.

Passive air samplers may play a role in the identification of the above-mentioned area sources and in the quantification of emissions emanating from them. In particular, the cost and simplicity

of passive sampling allows extensive networks of samplers to be deployed to record average concentrations over extended time periods and at high spatial resolution (Huang et al., 2014; McLagan et al., 2016). Novel passive sampling techniques for gaseous mercury (both GEM and GOM) will facilitate highly resolved, spatial mapping of time-averaged mercury air concentration in and around area sources of mercury to the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic. ~~An important future task will be development of numerical modeling techniques that can estimate long-term average emission fluxes from such concentration variability maps obtained in passive air sampling campaigns.~~ Development of numerical models for emission source strength estimate that can utilize long-term data obtained from passive samplers over a large spatial coverage ~~for emission source strength estimate~~ will also be an important future task.

Constraining the contribution of different sources of mercury to the atmospheric burden might be aided by the measurement of the isotopic composition of mercury in the atmosphere (Sun et al., 2016b). Presently, characterizing the isotopic composition of atmospheric mercury is challenging and has only been accomplished at a small scale, because of the need to collect sufficient mercury mass for isotopic analysis (e.g. Blum et al., 2017; Fu et al., 2016; Yu et al., 2016). ~~Passive air samplers might be useful for such measurements for their flexible sampling time periods, i.e., with extended sampling periods and thus having sufficient quantity of Hg mass.~~ Such measurements may be greatly facilitated by passive air samplers that can quantitatively sample mercury from the atmosphere for extended time periods. In particular, with a global network of passive air samplers, it might be possible to assess the average isotopic composition of the global atmosphere, which in turn may allow an assessment of the relative importance of

different types of mercury emissions. An important need is to investigate the potential for isotopic fractionation during the passive sampling process.

~~Existing emission inventories used in various CTMs should be compared in different model frameworks and with Hg speciation measurements (Pacyna et al., 2016). Comparing emission distribution generated from receptor-based analysis making use of speciated Hg may also improve existing emission inventories as further explained in Section 2.5.~~

2.2 Dry deposition and air-surface exchange

Consistent and reliable methods for determining the dry deposition of mercury compounds is critically needed since this process dominates the mercury input into many ecosystems. Current methods rely on measurement of atmospheric concentrations, combined with modeled deposition velocities, to estimate dry deposition fluxes (Zhang et al., 2016b). Further refinement of existing methods for directly measuring dry deposition fluxes is needed (Huang et al., 2014).

The most common approach for measuring dry deposition flux of oxidized mercury (GOM and PBM) is using devices with surrogate surfaces collecting the oxidized mercury (Wright et al., 2016). However, surrogate surfaces may not accumulate the same amount of oxidized Hg as natural surfaces. A surrogate surface would collect the same amount of oxidized mercury over different land uses at the same location assuming the same aerodynamic and chemical conditions, while in theory dry deposition flux can vary by a factor of 2 or larger over different land uses (Zhang et al., 2016b). Dry deposition algorithms validated using such field flux measurements have uncertainties of a similar magnitude. More complicated methods, such as the

relaxed eddy accumulation method (Skov et al., 2006; Zhu et al., 2015a, b), may provide more accurate flux data.

For GEM, bi-directional flux exchange makes the surrogate surface flux measurements meaningless. No surrogate surface can simulate the canopy since the majority of GEM uptake is by foliage and likely an active process by the vegetation. After uptake, oxidation of GEM could occurred and stored in the foliage (Wang et al, 2016; Yu et al, 2016) and part of the oxidized mercury can be reduced and re- emitted back to the air (Gustin, 2011). Gradient methods also have large uncertainties due to (1) lack of homogeneity of underlying surfaces, and (2) small gradients compared to instrumental detection accuracy. A modified gradient method is worth considering for measuring GEM flux (Wu et al., 2015). Relaxed eddy accumulation would work, but is a complex measurement technique (cf. Ostwalder et al., 2016). Concurrent gradient measurements of GEM and other well-known pollutant species (such as O_3) can provide a sense of data quality. Presently, GEM flux observations are made in relatively short-term campaigns (Edwards and Howard, 2013). Longer-term measurements are needed to adequately observe the variation in seasonal flux variation and the influence of environmental factors. This has been done in laboratory studies with chambers and some comparison with field measurements (cf. Eckley et al., 2011; Miller et al. 2011; Miller and Gustin, 2013).

Concurrent measurements of Hg fluxes using different methods (e.g., gradient measurements), litterfall, throughfall, and soil Hg content provide more complete information when combined with model estimates (Graydon et al., 2012). Individual data sets can have large uncertainties. With a combined data set, uncertainty ranges can be quantified and model

validation/improvement can be done with more confidence (Wright et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2016b). Such a combined campaign would be useful for quantifying the flux to forests, which are a potentially large sink of mercury worldwide. The geospatial coverage of GEM flux data is highly heterogeneous, and more field observations are needed in South America, South Asia, ~~and~~ Africa, Australia, and the polar regions (Zhu et al., 2016).

Other research advancements that can improve our understanding of flux exchanges include developing a fast-response detection technique at sufficiently high sensitivity to reduce the uncertainty of flux measurement, investigating kinetic parameters of Hg transformation (redox and coordination chemistry) in soil and on surfaces to fundamentally understand bi-directional GEM exchange, and developing mechanisms describing physicochemical and biological processes contributing to evasion and deposition processes. The quantity of GEM air-surface exchange at global scales can then be re-assessed using models that better describe processes.

2.3 Chemical mechanisms

Due to the limited knowledge on the chemical forms of oxidized Hg and its ultra-trace concentrations below the detection limit of existing instruments, both monitoring networks and CTMs use the operationally defined oxidized Hg (GOM and PBM). The chemistry of atmospheric Hg has long been regarded as a major source of CTM uncertainties (Lin et al. 2006; Pongprueksa et al. 2008; Subir et al., 2011, 2012) resulting in widely varying treatments of GEM oxidation in CTMs (Ariya et al., 2015; De Simone et al., 2014). Many oxidation reactions currently employed in CTMs or published studies are considered implausible based on kinetic and *Ab initio* thermodynamic equations (Balabanov et al., 2005; Calvert and Lindberg, 2005;

Dibble et al., 2012), such as the following:

$Hg + Br_2 \rightarrow HgBr_2$

$Hg + Cl_2 \rightarrow HgCl_2$

$Hg + BrO \rightarrow BrHgO$

$Hg + HOOH \rightarrow Hg(OH)_2$

$Hg + O_3 \rightarrow$ products

$Hg + OH \rightarrow$ products

$Hg + NO_3 \rightarrow$ products,

but could be facilitated by heterogeneous reactions or complex reactions with other constituents in the atmosphere (T. Dibble, personal communication). Gas-particle partitioning between GOM and PBM in CTMs is mostly oversimplified (see a summary in Ariya et al., 2015). A fundamental understanding of the chemistry driving atmospheric Hg cycling is needed, which requires GOM speciation measurements and laboratory studies on multiphase redox kinetics.

While technical breakthroughs of GOM speciation measurements are gradually emerging (cf. Deeds et al., 2015; Gustin et al., 2015; Lyman et al. 2016), quantum computational tools and laboratory experiments could shed light on the potential reactions and provide theoretical values for model interpretation of atmospheric Hg chemistry. Dibble et al. (2012) used quantum calculations to determine the stability of GOM compounds likely to be formed in the Br-initiated oxidation of GEM and demonstrated stable products, HgBrY, forming from HgBr reacting with NO_2, HO_2, ClO, and BrO, as well as little dependence of the bond strength of XHg-Y (X=Br, Cl) on halogen identity. In the first kinetic study of BrHg + NO_2 and BrHg + HOO, Jiao and Dibble (2017) computationally determined the rate constants and product yields for these two

reactions. Incorporating results from studies like these in atmospheric models is likely to cause significant changes in predicted rates of GEM oxidation in different geographical regions and various parts of the atmosphere~~,~~. A recent modeling study (Horowitz et al, 2017) suggested that applying those kinetic data in chemical transport models ~~which~~ can be consequential to simulations of the spatiotemporal variability of GOM concentrations and deposition ~~(Horowitz et al, 2017)~~. A new study (Ye et al., 2017), which was recently submitted, evaluated a regional chemical transport model (CMAQ) modified by implementing a Hg and Br chemical mechanism that included the most up-to-date kinetic data and reactions (Ye et al., 2016) and constrained by an observed vertical profile of BrO. They found that the modified CMAQ-Hg could capture significantly greater seasonal and diurnal variations of GEM, GOM, and PBM that the default version failed to do and simulate Hg wet and dry deposition in better agreement with observations or observation-based estimates. Moreover, calculated product yields could provide directions and guidance for laboratory experiments. Quantum chemical computation can in theory also be extended to studying the kinetics of aqueous and solid phase reactions, which could address multiphase redox chemistry. However, this remains quite challenging as it is very difficult to determine the geometries of aqueous and solid compounds among a multitude of other issues.

Research areas needed to improve the understanding of Hg cycling include (Ariya et al., 2015; Gustin et al., 2015; Solis et al., 2017; Subir et al., 2011, 2012, Sun et al., 2016a) : (1) primary oxidation mechanisms responsible for Hg removal from the atmosphere using measurement and quantum computation approaches; (2) Hg isotopic fractionation of gaseous ~~(Sun, et al. 2016a)~~ and aqueous phase redox processes in air, water, and soil; (3) interactions between various Hg

253 compounds and particles in aqueous and gaseous phases; (4) information on mercury cycling in
254 the upper troposphere and lower stratosphere; and (5) mechanism and kinetics of Hg(II)
255 reduction in natural water and atmospheric droplets, in particular, the agents responsible for
256 Hg(II) reduction under realistic environmental conditions.
257
258 **2.4 Field measurements of speciated mercury**
259 A growing body of research has shown that the only commercially-available instrument capable
260 of distinguishing between GEM, GOM, and PBM (the Tekran 2537/1130/1135 speciation
261 system) exhibits a low bias in measuring GOM, and a large uncertainty in measurements of PBM
262 (Cheng and Zhang, 2017; Gustin et al. 2013; Lyman et al. 2016; Rutter and Schauer, 2007;
263 Talbot et al., 2011). Ozone (Lyman et al., 2010; McClure et al., 2014), water vapor (Gustin et al.,
264 2013; Huang et al., 2015; McClure et al., 2014), and perhaps some other atmospheric
265 constituents (Lyman et al., 2016) interfere with GOM measurements. Bias in KCl coated-
266 denuder based GOM measurements varies with season, time of day, and chemical and
267 meteorological conditions (Gustin et al., 2016; Huang and Gustin, 2015; Lyman et al., 2016;
268 McClure et al., 2014), and current scientific understanding of GOM and PBM dynamics and
269 chemistry is based, in part, on these biased measurements. Improved measurement methods are
270 needed to re-establish and solidify scientific understanding of GOM and PBM sources, transport,
271 and fate in the atmosphere.
272
273 It is recommended that when developing or improving measurement techniques that researchers
274 consider the following: (1) reliable, routine, and reproducible calibration in laboratory and field
275 conditions, (2) ability to capture GOM and PBM without significant measurement bias, or at

least with a bias that is well characterized, and (3) ability to distinguish quantitatively between GOM and PBM. It is also desirable to identify and quantify individual oxidized mercury compounds, although this may be changing for operational purposes.

Measurement of ambient GOM at sub-pptv levels is challenging. ~~Existing GOM measurement methods are biased, and new methods under development may also exhibit bias, at least under some conditions.~~ Careful calibration under field measurement conditions is critical to understanding these biases and, potentially, correcting for them. Permeation tube-based methods have been used by several groups for GOM calibration (Finley et al., 2013; Huang and Gustin, 2015; Jones et al., 2016; Lyman et al., 2010; McClure et al., 2014), including an automated calibrator (Lyman et al., 2016), but other methods have been developed for high-concentration GOM calibration (e.g., Thermo Model 81i and Tekran Model 3310/3321) and could be adapted for ambient levels of GOM. Regardless of the method used, all future measurements of GOM should incorporate routine calibration in ambient air.

Cation-exchange membrane-based GOM collection methods have been explored as an alternative to denuder methods (Huang and Gustin, 2015; Huang et al., 2013). Air is drawn through the membranes, and oxidized mercury compounds are captured while other atmospheric constituents, including GEM, pass through. Membranes are then analyzed for total mercury content via standard methods. Limited studies in laboratory and ambient air have indicated that cation-exchange membranes may exhibit bias for selected Hg compounds under atmospheric conditions (Gustin et al., 2016; Huang and Gustin, 2015). Direct measurement of GOM with cation-exchange membranes requires long sampling times (on the order of 1-2 weeks), but

299 alternative collection configurations or materials could alleviate this concern.

300

301 Differential measurements that use quartz wool (Ambrose et al., 2015; Lyman and Jaffe, 2012;
302 Slemr et al., 2016) or cation-exchange membranes (Ambrose et al., 2015; Gratz et al., 2015) to
303 selectively trap GOM have provided GOM measurements with high temporal resolution. These
304 methods currently have high detection limits (about 100 pg m^{-3} (Ambrose et al., 2015)), but
305 modifications could possibly improve detection. Quartz wool appears to work poorly as a GOM
306 collection material in high-humidity environments (Ambrose et al., 2013; 2015). Other collection
307 methods for GOM have been explored, notably nylon membranes (Gustin et al., 2013; Huang
308 and Gustin, 2015), zirconia (Urba et al., 2017), and PTFE chips (Deeds et al., 2015). Nylon
309 membranes do not quantitatively capture GOM, but have been shown to be useful for thermal
310 desorption techniques (discussed below (Huang and Gustin, 2015)). Zirconia shows promise at
311 collecting GOM with low interference from ozone and water vapor (Urba et al., 2017). Some
312 other collection surfaces have been explored as well (Lyman et al., 2007; Rutter et al., 2008;
313 Urba et al., 2017).

314

315 Two types of methods under development focus on identifying individual oxidized mercury
316 compounds in the atmosphere. The first is mass spectrometry (MS)-based methods. Deeds et al.
317 (2015) described an atmospheric-pressure chemical ionization MS that can identify $HgBr_2$ and
318 $HgCl_2$ in the atmosphere after preconcentration and thermal desorption, though interference from
319 other atmospheric constituents made identification somewhat ambiguous in ambient air samples.
320 Jones et al. (2016) described a gas chromatography (GC)-MS system that successfully identified
321 and quantified $HgBr_2$ and $HgCl_2$ in the laboratory, but this system had high detection limits and

was unable to identify Hg compounds in ambient air. More work is needed to develop and refine MS-based methods, including and especially ambient air preconcentration methods that will work with MS systems.

The use of thermal desorption to identify oxidized mercury compounds in the atmosphere has also been explored (Gustin et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2017). In this technique, nylon membranes are used to collect mercury from ambient air, and membrane samples are then desorbed in a programmed temperature sequence, and desorbed mercury is passed through a pyrolyzer and analyzed for GEM. Oxidized mercury standards are loaded onto membranes and used to identify oxidized mercury compounds in the atmosphere. This method has shown that different oxidized mercury compounds exist in urban versus rural atmospheres, at high versus lower elevation sites (Gustin et al., 2016), and at the same location at different times or seasons (Huang et al., 2017). Evidence for $HgBr_2$, $HgCl_2$, HgO, and nitrogen- and sulfur-containing compounds has been produced via this method (Gustin et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2017). More work is needed to determine whether atmospheric constituents and conditions influence thermal desorption results.

No method has yet been developed that can quantitatively distinguish between GOM and PBM. This is a critical measurement need. A large portion of GOM can be lost on sample inlets that exclude large particles (Feng et al., 2003), and GOM can break through collection media and adhere to downstream filters that are intended for PBM collection (Lyman et al., 2016). GOM can adhere to inlets, tubing, and filters and later revolatilize, likely complicating the collection of PBM by filter-based methods (Lynam and Keeler 2005; Lynam and Keeler, 2002; Pierce and Gustin, 2017; Rutter and Schauer, 2007; Talbot et al., 2011).

2.5 Analysis and application of speciated mercury data

Observations of speciated atmospheric Hg have been used in identifying Hg source-receptor relationships (Cheng et al., 2015a and references there in), understanding Hg cycling, gas-particle partitioning, and oxidation mechanisms (Amos et al., 2012; Cheng et al., 2014; Gabay et al., 2017; Obrist et al.,2 011; Shah et al., 2016; Timonen et al., 2013; Ye et al., 2016), evaluating Hg transport models (Angot et al., 2016; Gustin et al., 2015; Kos et al., 2013; Weiss-Penzias et al., 2015), and quantifying Hg deposition budgets (Amos et al. 2012; Cheng et al., 2015b; Zhang et al., 2016b). Limited long-term data have also been applied in assessing Hg trends in the atmosphere and the effects of emission control policies (Brown et al., 2015; Castro and Sherwell, 2015; Cole et al., 2013, 2014; Martin et al., 2017; Steffen et al., 2005;).

With an increasing geographical coverage of speciated Hg data, receptor-based source apportionment analysis has been utilized for quantifying contributions to the observed ambient Hg concentrations (Cheng et al., 2015a). Results generated from these analyses should be carefully compared to the results of source-based approaches, ~~in which emission sources and intensities, mostly used in CTMs, are prepared using known anthropogenic sources and highly empirically parameterized natural sources (Pacyna et al., 2016).~~ ~~Such a practice~~which may have the potential to improve natural emission inventories that can then be used in improving CTMs performance. This is because~~in which~~ emission sources and intensities~~, mostly~~ used in most CTMs~~,~~ are prepared using known anthropogenic sources and highly empirically parameterized natural sources (Pacyna et al., 2016), while receptor-based methods do not require comprehensive knowledge on source emissions and can predict potential sources. Existing

emission inventories used in various CTMs should be compared in different model frameworks and with Hg speciation measurements (Pacyna et al., 2016).

CTMs were mostly evaluated using monitored wet deposition and total gaseous Hg (TGM) data (e.g., Gencarelli et al., 2017). These model simulations should be reassessed using available speciated Hg data as was done by Bieser et al. (2014), while keeping in mind the magnitude of potential uncertainties in the monitored Hg (Kos et al., 2013; Jaffe et al., 2014; Gustin et al., 2015; Cheng and Zhang, 2017). It is recommended that CTMs are evaluated over the Asian domain with high ambient oxidized Hg (and thus likely smaller uncertainties in oxidized Hg measurements), once monitoring data at multiple locations are available.

A major goal of monitoring speciated Hg in the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) Atmospheric Mercury Network (AMNet) in North America is to provide reliable dry deposition estimation using the inferential modeling approach (Zhang et al., 2016b). However, uncertainties for fluxes estimated using this approach are likely larger than a factor of 2, because of a lack of reliable flux data for developing and improving dry deposition algorithms. Different compounds of GOM will also have different dry deposition velocities (Huang et al., 2017). Intercomparison studies using multiple dry deposition algorithms should be conducted to provide a range of model uncertainties (Zhu et al., 2015a, b), and these model estimates should also be compared with other types of deposition measurements as mentioned in Section 2.2. Further development and/or improvement of the dry deposition algorithms are needed once new knowledge is gained.

Future work is needed to confirm the recently observed decreasing trend of TGM/GEM identified at a South Africa coastal site, over the Atlantic Ocean, at Canadian mid-latitudinal sites and in China (Fu et al., 2015), and more work is needed to continue to unravel the causes for these decreasing trends. For example, changes in anthropogenic emissions likely played a major role in the changes of atmospheric Hg (Zhang et al., 2016c), while changes in marine boundary layer halogen chemistry (Parrella et al., 2012) and in riverine and wastewater discharges (Amos et al., 2014) were found to have little impact on mercury trends. ~~Such~~The observed decreasing trends were likely to be associated with decreased reemission of legacy mercury, changing anthropogenic emissions, reduced use of mercury in commercial products, enhanced oxidative capacity due to increasing tropospheric ozone, thus more production of GOM, and decreased evasion from the Atlantic Ocean. The last factor was thought to be driven by declining subsurface water Hg concentrations resulting from reduced Hg inputs from rivers and wastewater and from changes in the oxidant chemistry of the atmospheric marine boundary layer. These hypotheses require further research and validation using extensive, longer-term datasets and model results produced from simulations realistically representing dynamical, physical, and chemical processes in mercury cycling in the atmosphere, the oceans and the terrestrial ecosystems, as well as the interactions among the three systems.

2.6 Network harmonization

Global distributions of tropospheric speciated Hg data remain sparse despite nearly two decades of extensive monitoring and modeling studies (Mao et al., 2016). Globally harmonized observation networks are needed for investigating intercontinental transport and providing mass balance estimation on a global scale. Measurement instruments, techniques, maintenance, and

standard operating procedures (SOP) must be comparable between networks. In North America, the NADP/AMNet has utilized consistent measurement instrumentation, SOP, and data quality review across its 25 monitoring sites. The AMNet SOP was developed between 2007 and 2009 with the goal of developing one SOP and data quality assurance (QA) procedure generally agreed upon by the Hg research community (Gay et al., 2013; Steffen et al., 2012). This AMNet SOP and QA procedure was also adopted by the Global Mercury Observation System (GMOS) for use at its >20 global sites (Sprovieri et al., 2016). Therefore, the two networks, GMOS and AMNet are using very similar procedures to produce comparable observations of mercury.

Consistent quality control of mercury observations and quality assurance (QA/QC) processes after data collection is also necessary to ensure the data are generated consistently within and between operational networks. Among the operating Tekran-based atmospheric networks, both the Canadian Atmospheric Mercury Measurement Network (CAMNet) and the Atmospheric Mercury Network (NADP's AMNet) in the U.S. have data QA/QC systems in place. The two systems are reasonably comparable (Steffen et al., 2012), making the two network datasets comparable and usable in combination. In both cases, significant amounts of data are invalidated due to many different causes (e.g. Gay et al, 2013), clearly showing that post measurement quality control is necessary. Additionally, the GMOS network also implemented a data quality control system (D'Amore et al., 2015), which is based upon both the Canadian and NADP systems~~,~~ and uses the majority of the flags from each system. A strict comparison between the three QC systems has not been completed but should be done in the near future. Based on the similarities in the data quality control procedures, it is at least reasonable to assume that the resulting data from the three networks are generally consistent. The QA/QC procedures from

these three mercury monitoring networks provide a basis for the development of a global QA/QC process for all atmospheric observations, which is essential for the global modeling community using the data from the three networks.

Consistent and continuous measurements in Asia are particularly important since Asia is the largest source region for mercury emissions (Pacyna et al., 2016). The Asia Pacific Mercury Monitoring Network (APMMN) was developed to organize Asian countries into a network framework that will follow standard techniques for wet deposition monitoring (based on NADP methods), and ultimately the speciation measurement of ambient Hg (GEM, GOM, and PBM). Although there have been continuous observational efforts in China in the past decade, a stronger coordination is recommended to avoid duplication of measurements and to enhance data quality consistence (Fu et al., 2016). Observational data in South Asia and the Mideast are particularly lacking. It is recommended to establish a harmonized monitoring network for data and procedure sharing in China and other Asian countries.

The value of consistent global measurements of atmospheric Hg concentrations will diminish without free exchange of data among scientists. As with AMNet, and planned with APMMN, all measurements should be validated using similar techniques, shared in organized databases, and released freely. This will allow modellers to use data for model evaluation, determination of locations with high concentrations, and provide data useful for scientists tracking mercury as it moves through the ecosystem. Furthermore, it will allow for policy makers to determine if mercury emission control achieves the desired deposition reduction of mercury compounds. Monitoring networks in regions other than the above-mentioned are also encouraged to fill data

gaps in terms of spatial coverage on the global scale, particularly in Africa and South America.

Each atmospheric network has a different set of protocols on data release, but it would be very valuable to data users and the research community if freely available and timely data can be accessed from one location that applies a consistent quality assurance and control system to validate the data. Perhaps the operating networks will evolve to this combined operation, or perhaps some type of system similar to the GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems, https://www.earthobservations.org/geoss.php) could be employed, so that a consistent and global dataset would be freely available to all data users.

It is conceivable that networks with large numbers of passive air sampling sites could complement existing networks for atmospheric mercury measurements using more sophisticated sampling techniques. Existing large-scale networks of passive air samplers at continental and global scales for organic contaminants (Gawor et al., 2014; Shen et al., 2004, Shunthirasingham et al., 2010) could serve as a template of what is feasible for gaseous mercury. Because of their low cost and limited operational requirements, passive air samplers could potentially play a role to increase the number of locations globally, although the comparison and interpretation of data obtained by different measurements require further research. Another research need is to establish the minimum change in long-term average concentrations that can be detected with passive sampling techniques, and what the best temporal resolution of such long-term monitoring should be.

Existing monitoring networks using the Tekran unit measure PBM at sizes <2.5 μm. However, Hg in coarse particles could contribute substantially to the total Hg dry and wet deposition (Fang

et al., 2012; Cheng et al, 2015b). Impactor measurements of total PBM in the marine boundary layer showed clear diurnal variations with daily maximums at around noon and minimums before sunrise (Feddersent et al., 2012). In contrast, Tekran PBM measurement data from a limited number of marine boundary layer and continental monitoring locations worldwide exhibited no definitive diurnal patterns in PBM concentrations (Mao et al., 2016; Mao and Talbot, 2012), likely due to artifacts associated with the instrument's GOM and PBM measurements (Gustin et al., 2015). To understand and quantify atmospheric mercury deposition budgets and gas-particle partitioning, it is imperative to monitor Hg in both fine and coarse particles.

3. Conclusions

Extensive field data of atmospheric mercury has been collected in the past several decades, and analysis and application of these data have generated a significant amount of knowledge regarding mercury sources, transport, chemical transformation, and deposition. However, large uncertainties exist in almost every aspect related to atmospheric mercury cycling, inherited from those of the measurements especially in the oxidized forms of mercury due to their ultra-trace ambient concentrations, instrument limitations, and undefined chemical speciation. Improving the accuracy of existing instruments and developing new technologies for routinely measuring speciated mercury is critically needed to provide high quality data for further understanding of mercury cycling. Harmonized networks using the same operational and data quality control standards are strongly recommended for field data collection in various regions of the world. Box or 1-D numerical models with detailed chemistry combined with laboratory tests may shed light on possible chemical mechanisms controlling mercury cycling, while regional to global

scale models should be further improved and evaluated using more recent data to provide a better constraint on mercury mass balance, and to improve emission and deposition budgets. Receptor-based models can be complementary to source-based models in improving emission estimation. Practical methods and instruments for surface flux measurements are needed to quantify natural emissions and dry deposition budgets, and existing algorithms estimating fluxes from these processes need further evaluation. Coordinated studies are strongly recommended for better integration of laboratory, field, and mathematical modeling research.

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