Reviewer's report

Title: How well do blood folate concentrations predict dietary folate intakes in a sample of Canadian lactating women exposed to high levels of folate? An observational study.

Version: 4 Date: 4 September 2007

Reviewer: Paul F Jacques

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors have adequately addressed my concerns.

However, in addressing my concern regarding the interpretation of Figure 1, the authors may have misinterpreted my comments, which were admittedly not that clear. I apologize for any confusion. See Minor revisions.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Interpretation of Figure 1 is complicated by the fact that the first and third folate intake groups are significantly different from each other, but the 1st, 2nd, and 4th, and the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th are not. So there is no simple interpretation of these observations. Clearly, based on these results, it is better to have a folic acid intake between 411 and 475 micrograms/day than to have an intake <151 micrograms. However, it is not clear that an intake of 151-410 or >475 is better than having an intake <151. Based on my comments that there was little benefit from intakes above 151 ug/d (I should have stated above 151-410 ug/d), the authors have modified their text to read that "... RBC folate concentrations did not increase further with synthetic folic acid intakes above 151 ug/d, ...". However, given the significant difference between the 1st and the 3rd categories, this statement is not entirely correct. The way that I though best to interpret this was to focus on the lack of difference between the 3 upper groups and suggest that once you get into the 151-410 category, there is probably little additional benefit from increased intakes. I think that this makes the most sense given the comparability of the mean RBC folate levels in the 2nd and 4th categories. So it might be best to modify the text to read something like this: "Given that women with synthetic folate intake between 151 and 410 had mean RBC folate concentrations comparable with the women in the upper two folate intake categories suggests that the synthetic folate intakes of these women exceeded..."
"Other instances in the manuscript where it states that intakes >151 micrograms per day produced little additional benefit should also be modified to read: intakes >151-410 ug/d produced little additional benefit (or even ">410 ug/d" would be acceptable in this case given the range of intakes).

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests