Reviewer’s report

Title: Total calcium absorption is similar from infant formulas with and without prebiotics and exceeds that in human milk-fed infants

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Reviewer: Harrie HN Lafeber

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In this paper Ca absorption from formula feeding is compared with that of a group of human milk fed infants. As could be expected from what we know from the literature Ca absorption from human milk is much better than that of formula fed infants but since the Ca content of formula is much higher than that of human milk the net result in formula fed infants is just as good. This was not influenced by the addition of prebiotics. No differences in 25 (OH) vit. D levels in the various groups was found.

General remarks.

A clear analysis, not highly original but of good scientific standard quality. Unfortunately the sample size of this study is too small to justify subdivision of infants with low or normal 25 (OH) levels in a post hoc manner. Therefore all conclusions based on this subdivision should be omitted.

Specific remarks:

Abstract Results section: Leave out sentence Total and fractional Ca were lower in……..than in formula fed infants >20 ng/ml.

Abstract Conclusion section: Leave out sentence Prebiotic formulas provide adequate bioavailable calcium compared to the human milk fed standard. This sentence does not add to the conclusion and might be explained as pure propaganda for prebiotic formulas (in this study formula without prebiotics are just as good)

Results section starting on page 9 Leave out all subdivisions of 25(OH) vit.D in the text: Stop at the end of first sentence on vitD at (p = 0.42). Then remove last three paragraphs on vit D metabolisme on pages9 and 10 (this totals five sentences.

All discussion about 25(OH) vit D levels may be maintained in the present form.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests