Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of maternal calcium intake during pregnancy on children blood pressure. A systematic review of the literature.

Version: 2 Date: 22 November 2006

Reviewer: Malinee Laopaiboon

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Here are some points that need to be clarified.

1. The main importance is heterogeneity between results of studies in children 12 months or more. The authors present that it was very small (I² < 1%). I am not sure whether the result is correct. If we consider the figure 1 of the 4 studies under sub-group of age 12 months or more, we can see that the I² should not be < 1%). However, I could not check the results as I am not sure if the data of observational studies is enough to be used in the I² analysis.

2. If the comment of the heterogeneity results of studies in children 12 months or more as mentioned in 1 is correct, the final conclusion of this review have to be modified. Please check this point as the figure seems to be not relevant to the numerical result of < 1%.

3. From my previous comment 2 “Table 4 shows data of offspring blood pressures in four levels of calcium intake of the women. It was unclear which groups provide the data of the crude and adjusted effect size.”

The authors’ response is not clear, “The effect size in table 4 is the regression coefficient between maternal calcium intake and offspring blood pressure. It does not refer to a single level of calcium intake. We have added a footnote to table 4 to clarify this issue.”

The unclear point is that why the authors present calcium intake in 4 categories and what is the criteria of the classification.

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

4. Some minor comments are

4.1 In McGarvey (1990), please check the offspring age at 3 months in the figure is not consistent to that in table 4 (6 months).

4.2 On page 9, the authors present at the middle of the page that ‘In summary, the two randomized trial included[22,25]………’ The reference of 25 should be 21, if the previous description of included studies is correct.

5. For the response to the other reviewer about quality assessment for the observational studies. I am not sure whether the information related to MOOSE guideline is appropriate for the recommendation on the assessment. The MOOSE is a guideline for reporting systematic review of observational studies.

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What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'