Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge of vitamin D and perceptions and attitudes towards sunlight among Chinese middle-aged and elderly women: a population survey in Hong Kong

Version: 1 Date: 5 June 2006

Reviewer: Michael Holick

Reviewer's report:

General

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

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The authors have evaluated perceptions about sunlight and vitamin D in middle aged and elderly Chinese women in Hong Kong.

Suggestions:

1. Why did the authors choose SPF >15? The authors should at least note from the publication of Matsuoka et al JCEM 64:1165, 1987 the Discussion that SPF of 8 reduces the ability of the skin to produce vitamin D by 95%.

2. The authors may not be aware that in the early morning and the late afternoon and evening exposure to sunlight even in the tropics will not result in any vitamin D production. (Webb et al JCEM 67:373, 1988). Thus, the authors should at least discuss this issue in the Discussion section and note that their analysis of sun exposure may have been limited because the time of the sun exposure was not adequately documented.

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No