Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of dietary intake of lactating women in China and its potential impact on the health of mothers and infants

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2012

Reviewer: Mingyan Xiang

Reviewer's report:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. Abstract (second paragraph)
   L29: “… 199 healthy lactating women in the postpartum days 3, 8, 30, 90…” and tables from 1 to 4 used days 2, 7, 30 and 90 for lactating women, and figure 1 used days 2, 10, 30 and 90. The authors should consistently use the postpartum days in the text, tables and figure.

2. Introduction (second paragraph)
   L78: “… that seen in the more developed countries.” should be ‘… that is seen in the more developed countries’.

3. Methods (fourth paragraph)
   L134: “The significance level was set at P = 0.05, …” should be ‘The significance level was set at P<0.05, …’.

4. Results (first paragraph)
   L141: “…22.8~23.3 (±1.9~2.2) and ….” should be ‘…22.8~23.4 (±1.9~2.2) and ….’ (according to table 1)
   L143-144: “… lower than that of lactating women (20.9±1.1).” should be ‘…lower than that of lactating women (23.0±2.0?). (according to table 1)

5. Discussion
   L285-286 (third paragraph): “Thus, the self-selected diet of lactating mothers in southeast coastal China ….” should be Thus, the self-selected diet of lactating mothers in southeast coastal China …’.
   L299-301 (fourth paragraph): “The recommended average macronutrient caloric composition of the Chinese diet is ~55% to 65% of calories from carbohydrates, ~12% to 16% from protein and 20% to 30% from fat [21, 22, 28].” should consistently be with “The Chinese Dietary Guidelines [22, 28] recommends the distribution of energy intake from three important nutrients as carbohydrate 55%#65%, fat 20%#30%, and protein 10~15%.” (in Results, sixth paragraph, L207-209)
   L338-340 (sixth paragraph): “…, ranging from ~290 mg/day at day 3 to ~170 mg/day at day 90 of lactation.” should be ‘…, ranging from ~290 mg/day at day 7 to ~170 mg/day at day 90 of lactation.’ (according to table 4)
L351-353 (seventh paragraph): “The mean carbohydrate intake from cereals during the first 90 days of lactation was only 108.9g/d~ 123.8g/d (Table 2).” The authors need to check the data (i.e. 108.9g/d~ 123.8g/d).

L361-364 (seventh paragraph): “Surprisingly, the control group of women consumed only 37~43% of the recommended carbohydrate (RNI 316.3#373.8g/day) (Table 4), while their protein and fat intake were ~12% and 20% higher than the RNI (Figure 1).” There is a self-contradiction because the fat intake of the control group was 64.3 g/day which is in the normal range i.e. 51.1-76.7 g/day (see Table 4).

Discretionary Revisions:

1. Vitamin D is an essential nutrient for mothers and infants. The paper hasn’t included the data of vitamin D. Could any explanation be given?
2. Fat can be saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. The polyunsaturated fats are essential dietary nutrients required for optimal human growth and development. The paper had only the data of total fat. Could any explanation be given?

**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 declare that I have no competing interests.