Author’s response to reviews

Title: Impact of In utero Exposure to EtOH on Corpus Callosum Development and Paw Preference in Rats: Protective Effects of Silymarin

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To: Biomed Central

From: Linda La Grange

Re: Attached Revised Manuscript

Please reconsider the attached revised manuscript "Impact of In Utero Exposure to EtOH on Corpus Callosum Development and Paw Preferences in Rats: Protective Effects of Silymarin" for publication in your journal.

Below is a checklist of the reviewers' comments and the changes I have made in response to the comments:

Reviewer Videla

- We have made the grammatical and organizational corrections.
- We have included the aim of the work in the abstract.
- The abbreviations have been explained.
- Numbers have been added to the list of references and et al. used instead of all of the authors' names.
- We have eliminated most passages that were in the passive voice.
- The statistical tests have been described in the results section. More narrative has been added to the results section.

Reviewer Valenzuela

- We have provided the reference confirming that SY does not affect blood alcohol levels.
- Table titles have been added as well as standard deviations and n values.
- Part of the gender-specific portion of the discussion has been deleted and two paragraphs added that address the results in Tables 1 and 2.
- Under "Minor Points" all four notations have been addressed.

Reviewer #3

- Standard deviations have been added to the tables.
Regarding the comment on CC weight measure: the final sentence in paragraph #2 of the Discussion section has been added.

I'm not sure what the reviewer intended in critique #2, but the observational results regarding the splenium development were reported.

The word "protective" has been removed from the 6th sentence, 3rd paragraph in the discussion section.

The last paragraph alluding to alpha-fetoprotein has been removed. The reviewer asked for further elucidation on the subject; however, I was unable to locate any further information that could be applicable to this study.

Rationale for using female rats has been added to the Subjects subsection of the Methods section.

Explanation for the dosage of silybin is also included in the Subjects subsection.

Can phosphatidylcholine influence dependent measures? We have previously run toxicity studies on a range of doses of phosphatidylcholine and have determined that at the doses used in this study there are no observable effects.

Rationale for discontinuing liquid diets 5 days before birth is given in the Subjects subsection of the Methods section.

The four day range in age at weaning - there were only 2 rats that were not weaned at day 20.

Table 2 data discussion has been expanded and can be found in the 2nd paragraph of the Discussion section.

References have been numbered.

Referee's comment #4 about paw preference as been addressed in the Discussion section within the 3rd paragraph.

Referee's comment #5 I can't address. I haven't been able to determine if paw preference neurons traverse the splenium.