Reviewer’s report

Title: Dairy products and calcium intake during pregnancy and dental caries in children

Version: 2 Date: 6 April 2012

Reviewer: Carlos Camargo

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MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS
1. 31% PARTICIPATION RATE -- Both reviewers commented on the low participation. I asked that the authors compare included/excluded groups and include a table with these results. The authors write that it would be "prohibitively difficult" to create a table comparing the two groups and that they decided to not include the requested table. They then present the tables in the response letter only (i.e., they were created but just not shown to manuscript readers). The tables lack significance testing, however, which hinders the ability of reader to see where the groups differed (at least in statistical terms). Given that the study subjects are clearly older, of higher socioeconomic status, have higher intake of yoghurt and calcium, and are less likely to smoke ... I don't think it's correct to say that there were "no material differences" (new text on page 8). I don't want to harp on this point but I do think it will help readers to see these inclusion/exclusion data with formal testing for differences.

2. BIOLOGICAL PLAUSIBILITY -- I would have liked a better explanation about why cheese would be protective and not milk ... but it appears that the authors have no explanation. They do acknowledge that an earlier paper suggests that children's intake of yogurt -- not cheese or milk -- is inversely associated with dental caries in children. These findings, and the lack of any biologically plausible mechanism or underlying theory, do suggest that it would be prudent to highlight multiple testing and "chance" and as another explanation of the observed results.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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