Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of short-term fructooligosaccharide intake on equol production in Japanese postmenopausal women consuming soy isoflavone supplements: A pilot study

Version: 3 Date: 27 March 2013

Reviewer: Theresa Larkin

Reviewer's report:

The authors have made a good effort to improve their manuscript based on all the Reviewer's reports and it is in a much improved state. Overall this study is interesting and although a small-scale study, but still sought to determine short-term effects of FOS supplementation. There are still a number of grammatical errors which I include here under Minor Essential Revisions:

Minor Essential Revisions.
1. Abstract: Line 1 change "can" to "may". Line 4 "a person's" instead of "their person's". Line 8: change "has a " to "have"
2. Introduction: PAGE 4: Line 7: include word: "may confer distinct". Line 15 change "their" to "a".
   PAGE 5: Line 6 "lower" not "lowers". Lines 7 and 8: swap sentence around: "In Western countries, a portion of total......."
   Line 9: edit: "...(FOS) have prebiotic activity in addition to being a form of dietary fibre"
   Line 15: "To date, a few studies have reported the effects of dietary fibre...."
3. Methods:
   Page 6: Line 14: "The study design involved two 2-week dietary periods separated by a 2-week washout. During each 2 week interevention period, fermented foods.......for the duration of the study. The washout period required the same dietary exclusions as the intervention periods.
   Line 20: "Therefore, a 2 week washout period was used in our study,..."
4. Results and Discussion:
   Page 8: Line 26: insert p value in relation to the significantly higher equol.
   Page 9: lines 14: "was not significantly different after 1 week...or 2 weeks....."
   Line 15-17: Similarly, in equol non-producers, FOS intervention didn not affect the urinary.....after 1 week...or 2 weeks....
   Line 18 "no differences between FOS and control groups after 1 week and 2 weeks...."
Please clarify lines 19 - 20. Should there be two p-values? FOS intervention did not affect urinary.....after 1 week (p = ..) or 2 weeks (p = ...).
Line 21: "However, significant differences were...."
Page 10, lines 6 - 9. Start a new paragraph at "In the present study, there were........" and combine with the paragraph starting line 9.
Line 16: "may correlate"
Line 25: "affecting"
Page 11: Line 3 "increase the number" (remove its)
Line 20: "With chronic ingestion (2 months)...."
Page 12, Lines 9 - 10 "Additionally, the washout period was only 2 weeks, thus carryover....."
Throughout: please replace "P" with "p" when referring to significance.

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

**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.