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: 4 Date: 5 June 2013

Reviewer: Charlotte Atkinson

Reviewer’s report:

While the latest round of revisions has improved the manuscript, there are some remaining revisions that should be made to further improve the manuscript.

- Minor essential revisions
  Abstract; it would be useful to include the number of participants on whom the analyses were conducted, given that there were several withdrawals.
  Page 8, line 22; please change ‘consisted with previous’ to ‘consistent with this previous’
  Page 9, line 3; a p value of 0.08 is not considered to be ‘significant’- please amend the text accordingly.
  Page 9, lines 16-25; why have the p-values for the changes in equol to daidzein ratios from baseline to 1 / 2 weeks among the equol non-producer control group now been omitted from the manuscript?
  Page 10, lines 14-15; ‘FOS treated with isoflavones...’ is still not overly clear – do you mean ‘Supplementation with FOS and isoflavones...’?
  Page 10, lines 23-24; Similarly, the sentence that starts with ‘If a diet had low isoflavone...’ is still not clear either – isn’t it the FOS that you are hypothesising would elicit a response in terms of increasing the capacity of colonic microbiota to produce equol (rather than the isoflavone supplement eliciting a response)?

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