Reviewer’s report

Title: Multivitamins/multiminerals in Switzerland: not as good as it seems

Version: 1
Date: 5 February 2014

Reviewer: Irina Milisav

Reviewer’s report:

Droz and Marques-Vidal assessed the composition of multivitamin/multimineral supplements (MVM) at their local market and their compliance with local legislation. They point out that the composition of MVM is heterogeneous with respect to the number and composition of compounds. This hampers systematic comparison and study of MVM. Likewise there is no single answer whether the effect of supplementing multivitamins and minerals is beneficial or has adverse effects on health, especially as the effects of vitamin and mineral supplementation do not seem to be identical for all age groups, and subpopulations. In fact some subpopulations may benefit from MVM supplementation, while similar supplementation may result in adverse effects for the others.

Major Compulsory Revisions:


2. ADI is being used in the Abstract, while RDA in the Results, while quoting the same numbers. It is necessary to clarify whether the authors refer to ADI or RDA. (e.g. Please clarify whether less than 15 % of RDA (page 4) or ADI (Abstract) of MVM should not be indicated on the label according to Swiss law). Please correct these discrepancies thorough.

3. The authors propose that MVMs are defined as components that contain at least 10 different vitamins or minerals to facilitate standardization and comparison between studies. This sounds practical from the perspective that the name would reflect the composition of the product; however, regardless of the name, comparing MVM containing 5 ingredients is equally important, as the authors themselves quote that those contain even higher concentrations of vitamins and minerals that those of 10 compounds.

4. The authors claim that “the presence of vitamin K (mainly indicated as prevention against arthritis) in one out of six MVMs (one third if the 10 threshold is used) stresses the need for a warning.” Subsequent discussion on this topic comes short of any suggestion /direction/ recommendation, which the authors should include.
Minor Essential Revisions:
5. Page 6, paragraph 3
Please clarify the sentence:
“Several MVMs indicated in their label vitamins or minerals in amounts lower than 15% of RDA, a finding in disagreement with Swiss legislations [6]”

6. Page 6, paragraph 1:
Perhaps the text should read “MVM consumers tend to pursue a healthier dietary pattern”, instead of “MVM consumers tend to present a healthier dietary pattern”?

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests.