Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of yogurt containing polydextrose, Lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM and Bifidobacterium lactis HN019: a randomized, double-blind, controlled study in chronic constipation

Version: 2 Date: 19 May 2014

Reviewer: Retnagowri Rajandram

Reviewer's report:

Congratulations you have planned and done an interesting study to improve chronic constipation in a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. The study was well planned. The two study population were somewhat balanced. The statistical approach was adequate.

However at the moment I cannot accept this manuscript for publication for the following reason.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached. For example, additional necessary experiments or controls, statistical mistakes, errors in interpretation.

Include in publication: The methods used are fair and appropriate however author/s have to clarify how they randomised the subjects. Did they use a randomised table or computer generalised randomisation, etc?

In regards to sufficient details to replicate the work in the discussion and future direction author/s have to include what is the next step based on their findings, are they going to include detailed dietary diaries, increase duration or have a follow-up group after stopping the treatments if condition relapse, these discussion points need to be included.

Figure 1, graph for (B) is missing?

Paragraph starting with Analysis of Agachan score... you need to explain the significant of this finding!

Sentence starting with However this reached only....why the use of word however you believe control group should show significant improvement?

Sentence starting as can be seen from Figure 1....this sentence is unclear and need to be revised as at this point I do not see the relevance of this Figure?

Also if you want to have Figures why not convert table 2, 3, 4 as figures? So have the Figure above represent the table below.

See this link for example:
http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/box-whisker-plot.html
Also mean ± standard deviation need to be expressed 14.3±2.4 and not how you have it in the tables currently with the comma in the in between. Change all please.

In the abstract please change “however only treatment group” do you want the control group to show a different?

Conclusion in the abstract should include the important of these findings.

Is the writing acceptable?

Why is there a results and discussion heading then again a discussion heading?

It should either be results heading then discussion heading. Or just one heading Results and Discussion and remove the latter.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. Under Statistical analyses please include when appropriate at the end of the first sentence.

2. Under Results and discussion part line 5-6 need to make a space “21 participants” to “21 participants”.

3. Also under Results and Discussion: Sentence starting “The subjects in the treatment group….compared to control group…” Table 4 has to be in bracket.

There are some spacing issues. Please check document thoroughly.

Move the last sentence under methods “this project was approved…” to join the final paragraph under methods.

For Table 1. The heading should be “Baseline characteristics of treatment vs control groups” and not what you have now.

Minor issue do include in publication but show: an example of this randomisation process (proof).

- Discretionary Revisions

None

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

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.