Reviewer's report

Title: Soy protein supplementation does not cause lymphocytopenia in postmenopausal women

Version: 1 Date: 9 December 2005

Reviewer: Thomas Register

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Statistical considerations:
The data appears to lend itself to a 1x2 analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), using pretreatment values as a covariate.

General comment related to the background and discussion:
Bone/Osteoporosis: The descriptions regarding soy effects on the skeleton are unbalanced. The current evidence suggests that dietary soy protein and/or isoflavones (phytoestrogens) have only modest (if any) effects on the skeleton, and do not significantly prevent bone loss in post-menopausal women. A prior publication from this study found no effect of soy supplementation on bone mass in these same subjects. Given these weak effects on bone, it is not appropriate to view soy and/or isoflavones as a substitute for accepted therapies such as estrogen, bisphosphonates, PTH analogues, etc.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The "change" from baseline in basophil counts in both groups might be an instrument calibration problem. Automated basophil counts have a high coefficient of variation. What were the intra- and interassay coefficients of variation for the CBC parameters?

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'