Author’s response to reviews

Title: Prevalence of at-risk genotypes for genotoxic effects decreases with age in a randomly selected population in Flanders: a cross sectional study.

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Author’s response to reviews:

Gent, 13/9/2011

To Prof. Philippe Grandjean and Prof. David Ozonoff, Editors in Chief of Environmental Health.

Dear Colleagues,

Herewith I present, for publication in your journal, the second revision of our manuscript "Prevalence of at-risk genotypes for genotoxic effects decreases with age in a randomly selected population in Flanders: a cross sectional study." by Hans B. Ketelslegers, Roger W.L. Godschalk, Ralph W.H. Gottschalk, Ad M. Knaapen, Gudrun Koppen, Greet Schoeters, Willy F. Baeyens, Vera Nelen, Joep P.M. Geraedts, Joost H.M. van Delft, Jos C.S. Kleinjans and Nicolas A. van Larebeke.

It is an original research article based on the Flemish human biomonitoring program, has not been previously published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Participation of human subjects did not occur until after informed consent was obtained.

The author(s) declare that they have no competing interests.

All authors have read the manuscript, agree that the work is ready for submission to a journal and accept responsibility for the manuscript's contents.
In my opinion the manuscript is well suited for publication in Environmental Health because it brings some evidence suggesting that persons, carrying a higher number of at risk alleles in genes involved in the protection against genotoxic substances, are less likely to reach age 50 to 65, this in sufficient health to be able to participate in a biomonitoring study. Our study, performed in Flanders, a typical densely populated and highly industrialized West European region, might contribute to the discussion concerning the relevance of inter-individual differences in susceptibility with regard to human health risk assessment. This is certainly a topic of public health interest and of importance pertaining to the environment.

All changes made to the first revision are highlighted in red in this second revision.

The editorial office wrote:

“please remove the first few words in the Conclusions section, as they are repetitive.”. This was done.

“The list of abbreviations should be in a single paragraph.”

This was done.

" The column headings in Table 1 should be shortened (e.g. invited, participated, genotyped) , and column 3 should be dropped."

This was done.

" Please consider redesigning Table 3 so that it will fit in portrait format. The column headings should be shortened, and there is no need for frequencies with 6 digits. Perhaps you can report only percentages."

Table 3 was redesigned, with shorter column headings, and only percentages were reported, so that table 3 now fits in portrait format.

“Table 4 should also be redesigned, best by turning columns into rows, so that the table will fit in portrait format.”

Table 4 was redesigned by turning columns into rows and now fits in portrait format.

Response to the comments of reviewer Franco Merlo.

No additional changes were requested by the reviewer.

I hope that your journal will be able to publish our paper and send you my best wishes.

Nik van Larebeke

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