Author's response to reviews

Title: Mercury Levels in Fish Jerky Snack Food: Marlin, Ahi, and Salmon

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
September 26, 2011

Dear Dr. Grandjean;

Thank you for your thoughtful input and consideration of this manuscript. To answer your question on FDA and the desiccation or smoking of fish and mercury concentrations, I have yet to find a reference where the FDA has addressed this. I could only find references for fishmeal being discussed in the literature from many years ago. The fact that fishmeal could concentrate mercury, as discussed in my book, was what prompted me to test the jerky.

The revisions are as follows:

1. Title change. “level” is replaced by “concentration.”
2. Concentration will replace “level” where appropriate. The term “level” is used frequently in FDA reports, so it is difficult to know at times whether the change would be appropriate. Please advise if you feel other changes in regard to this need to be made.
3. The discussion section and results sections were revised. A “result” was removed from the discussion and placed in its proper place in the results section.
4. Comments on water content and concentration were made in both the results and discussion sections and are highlighted with track changes, as requested by reviewer.
5. Academic degrees were removed from the author list.
6. The EPA mercury limit for fish was added to the background section.
7. Comment as to mercury strongly being bound to tissues and no cooking methods known that can remove it were added to page 4.
8. How the marlin data compared to the EPA’s limit was added to the results section as requested by the reviewer.
9. Line numbering was removed.
10. Numbers used in counting were written out.
11. Metric units were added where appropriate.
12. On title page the heading “title page” was removed.
13. In abstract, the colons were removed and headings are now above the text.
14. Abbreviations, competing interests, and author’s contributions were moved to the end of the manuscript.
15. Figure format. I removed the title from within the figure.
16. Minor formatting errors were corrected.
17. The figure was renamed to: Mercury Concentrations in Marlin Jerky. And is submitted as a separate file.
18. Minor typos were corrected.
19. References formatted as “justified.”

Thank you for your input and advice,

Sincerely,

Jane M. Hightower, MD