Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 25 August 2011

Reviewer: David Carpenter

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions: None

Minor Essential Revisions:

In a number of places there is inadequate background information. It should be clearly stated that mercury binds to muscle, and is not in the lipid layer. Thus the results with jerky salmon as compared to fresh is what would be expected. A bit more discussion of the marlin results would also be helpful, for example how one might expect mercury levels to vary with size of fish.

It would also be valuable to indicate how many of each of the types of samples are above the EPA standard, in addition to the FDA regulatory limit. The information on how the FDA standard was set is very helpful, and clearly these standards were not derived only from contemporary health information. However when applying the EPA guidance it is clear that the problem is even worse.

This is a quite short manuscript and would benefit by added paragraphs that reference the known adverse health effects of mercury in fish. It also should be made clear that most of the mercury in fish is methyl mercury.

Discretionary Revisions:

The manuscript would benefit from minor editing. For example the first lines of the Introduction are exactly the same as the abstract, which is not good style. Beginning sentences with numbers (ie., "15 bags of marlin jerky") is poor style, and if left as is the number 15 should be spelled out.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.