Reviewer's report

Title: Increasing work-place healthiness with the probiotic Lactobacillus reuteri

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2005

Reviewer: Andreas Aly

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper gives interesting and important new information on the potential benefit of probiotics in a normal life situation. The methods are straightforward as are also the report of the results and the discussion. The design of the study and the is appropriate to answer the question, and the results are clear. The study should be considered to be an incentive for larger trials over a longer time period and report on other health indicators.

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

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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)
1. In the Introduction, the numbers of references 2 and 3 are mixed up.
2. In the Results, reference is given to Figure 2, should be Figure 1 (since there is no figure 2).
3. In the Results, it would be interesting to know, how many sick-days the studied population had in total including other reasons than those investigated in this study
4. In the conclusions in Discussion, it should be written clearly that the reduction of sick-days concerns only sick-days due to symptoms from the respiratory and/or gastrointestinal tract. The authors should also state, if the speculation about improved productivity (4.4 million working days) per year in Sweden really concerns that kind of sick-leave.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance 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:
1. In 2003, I have given lectures about the role of probiotics in health and disease to employees of BioGaia and of a company that market the L. reuteri product of Biogaia.
2. No
3. No
4. No
5. No