Reviewer’s report

Title: Dietary calcium intake and mortality risk from cardiovascular disease and all causes: a meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies

Version: 2 Date: 23 June 2014

Reviewer: Darren C Greenwood

Reviewer’s report:

My only point that was not addressed was this one:

“It would be helpful to see the levels of intake contributing to the curves indicated on the graph, so the reader can see where the bulk of the data is, and how many studies / observations are in the extremes.”

The authors have answered it with a detailed summary of their methods, which as they state are now standard, and I have used them many times myself. However, my point was that, additionally, the graph could indicate on the horizontal axis where the data are on which it is based, e.g. using tick marks. This is sometimes useful to know, because curvature can sometimes be induced by a cohort effect rather than a real effect, e.g. where the curve is based on just one cohort that has used a different dietary assessment tool, or with greater measurement error, the different RR for the more extreme intakes do not reflect true nonlinearity. So it’s nice to know that the curvature is based on several studies, not just one. I apologise that I had not made this point clearer, but it is just a minor point, and I’m happy for the authors to leave this off if it is problematic for them.

There description of the test for nonlinearity is now much better, and describes the test more in line with what I would have anticipated.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have received grant funding from Danone plc for two small projects unrelated to this work. I declare that I have no other potential competing interests.