

Reviewer's report

Title: Development of estimates of dietary nitrates, nitrites, and nitrosamines for use with the Short Willet Food Frequency Questionnaire

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Reviewer: C K Chow

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The manuscript by Griesenbeck et al. reports the development of estimates of dietary nitrates, nitrites, and nitrosamines for use with the Short Willet Food Frequency Questionnaire. As the database necessary for the estimation/assessment of dietary nitrates, nitrites, and nitrosamines is currently not available, the information is useful and needed. However, further development/ revisions of the database are needed to come up with a comprehensive and useful information source. The following points are suggested for the authors:

1. Tables need to be rearranged. As Tables 2 and 3 are showing the same data (expressed in two different units), it is easier for the readers to understand if the two tables are merged into one. Also, information shown in Table 1 can and should be included as part of the new table to indicate the sources of information/data derived. If the new table is too big, authors may consider dividing it into several tables, e.g., a) Dairy and meat products, b) Fruit products, c) Grain products, d) Vegetable products (including beans), and e) Fats, oil, nuts, sweets and alcoholic beverages.
2. Mean values and ranges of nitrates, nitrites, and nitrosamine in each food item from each article should also be listed individually and appropriately referenced. This would allow readers to check/refer the literature source as needed.
3. A number of values reported need to be double-checked to verify their unit bases and accuracy. For example, the Table 3 shows that nitrate, nitrite and nitrosamine contents are 9.50 mg, 0.038 mg and 0.005 ug, respectively, per 100 g cantaloupe. If the values are expressed based on a fresh weight, then their values nitrate, nitrite and nitrosamine would be higher than most meats and meat products when expressed as a dry weight basis, and this does not seem to be reasonable. Also, why should orange juice and oranges have a same value, and does fresh milk, but not yogurt, contain relatively high nitrosamines (0.027-0.086 ug/100g)?
4. More clear identification or separation for food items listed is needed. For example, liver and chicken liver are separately listed in Tables 2 & 3. What is the first "liver" from?