

Reviewer's report

Title: Phellodendron and Citrus extracts benefit joint health in osteoarthritis patients: a pilot, double-blind, placebo-controlled study

Version: 2 Date: 16 July 2009

Reviewer: Kevin Ruff

Reviewer's report:

The paper is much improved from the original version.

Discretionary Revisions

As the results are based on a completer analysis, care must be taken in reporting treatment effects. That is, reporting changes in scores from baseline, but reporting statistical differences versus the placebo group has the potential to create confusion. It is advisable to report absolute treatment effects (which include placebo effects) to reduce the potential for confusion. For example, the NT group had a change in LAI from baseline of -3.7 (32%), but the placebo group also had a change in LAI from baseline of -1.9 (16%). This results in an absolute treatment effect of -1.8 (16%). This is especially important in a trial that has a extremely high dropout rate, because it is commonly accepted in pain-related clinical trials that dropouts do not occur randomly, but are biased toward lack of improvement. The reasons for dropout obtained in this trial do not allow you to discount this bias as the majority sight no reason given for dropping out.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I am currently employed in the dietary supplement industry and my company produces a joint health ingredient.