

Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of Lactic Acid Bacteria (LAB) supplement in management of constipation among nursing home residents

Version: 1 **Date:** 13 July 2009

Reviewer: Philippe Marteau

Reviewer's report:

Hyang Mi An et al. studied 19 elderly subjects with constipation, treated them for 2 weeks with a mixture of lactic acid bacteria and report a non significant increase in bowel habits, an increase in the faecal bacteria growing on MRS medium, a decrease in fecal urease and tryptophanase

Comments and questions:

- 1- The authors stress themselves that the number of subjects was very limited as well as the study duration
- 2- Abstract: the probiotic properties are not a general property of any lactic acid bacteria. This should also be changed page 5.
- 3- The strains of LAB used here should be mentioned (not only the species *L. acidophilus* but the real strains. If these strains have already been studied with beneficial properties, they deserve to be named probiotics (according to the official definition), if not they should just be named LAB but not probiotics.
- 4- The authors should state which species of bacteria grow on MRS medium
- 5- What is the evidence to state that b-glucosidase is harmful ? (page 9)
- 6- Page 12: the unit for the faecal bacterial counts should be given.
- 7- Discussion page 13, 1st §: the authors mention faecal short chain fatty acids and enterolactone but these have not been measured !
- 8- Discussion last line page 13: one may imagine that ingested LAB may increase endogenous bacteria growing on MRS and the authors conclusion is thus erroneous.
- 9- Conclusion page 15: the authors state that they LAB improved the balance of the intestinal microflora but this was not studied !
- 10- Table 3 : spelling error : state instead of sate.

Level of interest: Reject as not of sufficient priority to merit publishing in this journal

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests' below