

## ANSWERING REVIEWERS



May 21<sup>st</sup> 2014

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 2429-review.doc). There are two copies, one with yellow background on those areas where major changes were made and one "clean" copy.

**Title: Probiotics in dietary guidelines and clinical recommendations outside European Union**

**Authors:** Stephan Ebner, Linda Smug, Wolfgang Kneifel, Seppo Salminen, Mary Ellen Sanders

**Name of Journal:** *World Journal of Gastroenterology*

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 10208

The manuscript has been significantly improved following revision according to the suggestions of reviewers and we thank the reviewers for their comments. The revision and the suggestions have been made as follows:

1 Format has been updated

2 Revision has been made according to the suggestions of the reviewer as follows:

**Reviewer 1 comments:** Although the title of the manuscript is very apt and interesting, the manuscript lacks substance. I recommend major revision. Authors have included various non European countries in the review for assessing their dietary guidelines for fermented foods, stating no probiotic recommendations in any of these except those for Canada. Furthermore, as per my knowledge, the regulatory status indicated in table 1 is not appropriate and countries like Japan have already conferred special FOSHU (Foods for special health issues) status to yoghurts. Same applies for several other countries too. Fermented foods are not only restricted to yoghurt but include numerous other products which have not been included in the present review. Observations or stand of important 'outside European Union' regulatory agencies like FDA and ICH has not been included in the present review. FDA has its own guidelines for probiotics in food. Figure 1 and 2 need improvement as they fail to add any value to the text. More extensive literature search is recommended.

***Author response:***

1. Our manuscript focus is on dietary guidelines – this is now expressed more clearly in the revised manuscript. Including the regulations on health claims and other aspects of regulatory approvals would be too much for one manuscript to cover and therefore we focused on food-based dietary guidelines and excluded health claims and FOSHU approvals as well as similar claim related matters elsewhere.

2. Figure 1 has been removed and replaced with the newly designed figure 2 (now figure 1) which corresponds to the clarity of the original question.

**Reviewer 2 comments:** The paper by Ebner et al. aims at reviewing the consideration of probiotics in clinical/dietary guidelines outside the European Union. I must say I engaged the review of this paper with enthusiasm (which is quite rare) because I thought that it would introduce and criticize differences with the EU, and possibly talk about the issue of claims, which is directly related. None of this happens, and as a result the paper lacks punch in my opinion. The title should probably read 'the European Union'. Also inflammatory bowel disease (above Fig. 2). No page numbers. Corrections showing.

*Author response:* We are sorry that the reviewers misunderstood the focus of our paper which was to search for probiotics and yoghurts in dietary guidelines which are designed to direct eating habits towards healthier life-styles. This is now clarified and the focus of the manuscript is clearly expressed. The figure 2 has been redrawn and clarified as well.

**Reviewer 3 comments:** This article aims to review possible recommendations for fermented foods and probiotics in several countries outside the EU, focusing on food-based dietary guidelines with emphasize on recommendations related to yoghurt and probiotics. This is a well-written article and provides a unique platform providing excellent starting points for readers interested in the regulation of health promoting bacteria and products utilizing such bacteria. As far as the literature concerned this is one of very few articles that summarize the recommendations on probiotics from scientific associations. In general this article will be of value to the readers of WJG.

*Author response:* We thank the reviewer for the comments. We have still tried to focus on producing a more clearly written manuscript pointing specifically to food-based dietary guidelines and we are encouraged by the positive words.

**Reviewer 4 comments:** Title: Suggest 'outside the European Union' Abstract: Good; appropriate. Introduction: 'optimal' would be preferable to 'the best'. Tables are informative. Need to italicise all organisms (eg Saccharomyces). References; Appropriate.

*Author response:* we are delighted that the reviewer has found the point in the manuscript and we still try to focus more and improve the manuscript and the readability of the manuscript. The comment on italics in the text on organisms is now checked and corrected as suggested.

**Reviewer 5 comments:** This work doesn't substantially add any relevant data to the existent and more detailed reviews on this subject. Authors may try on a more specifically probiotics-dedicated journal to publish this paper.

*Author response:* Thank you for the comment. We did not aim at reviewing health claims or probiotic effects but rather focused on dietary guidelines and their interpretation in terms of yoghurt, fermented foods and bacteria or probiotics, if mentioned in the above. All these matters have now been clarified according to the instructions of other reviewers and the focus should be clearer now.

3 References and typesetting were corrected to be according to the guidelines.

4. The figure (remaining one figure) has been made using Adobe Illustrator program and the figure is provided in the EPS format usually used by publishers.

Thank you again for publishing our manuscript in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Sincerely yours,

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