

## Biostatistics statement

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

**ESPS Manuscript NO:** 16097

**Title:** Female SDT fatty rats develop NASH-like hepatic lesions

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The statistical methods of this study were reviewed by Dr. Hisayo Morinaga from Biological/Pharmacological research laboratories, Central Pharmaceutical Research Institute, Japan Tobacco Inc.

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

Sincerely yours,



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