

Reviewer's report

Title: Participant experiences in a breastmilk biomonitoring study: A qualitative assessment

Version: 2 Date: 6 November 2008

Reviewer: Hans Keune

Reviewer's report:

In response to the author's response to my remarks:

1) The points here have improved mainly due to additional material; the rest of the clarifications are ok.

2) I strongly disagree with their argument: limiting risk communication to clear-cut risk information would mean almost nothing can be dealt with in the spirit of modern risk communication when it comes to environment and health issues. They present a rather limited picture of this broad field of expertise. Discussing and communicating limited knowledge on risks to my understanding is an important subject and task in the field of risk communication. I would appreciate some comments of the authors on this issue in the paper.

3) Do I understand correctly that they agree with my arguments but blame it more or less on the IRB, which they call traditional? Perhaps they should state this more clearly: it seems they want to support a different attitude? Do they criticize the attitude of experts deciding on what is best for participants? Do they agree that involving participants in discussing such issues might be a good idea? How and at what stage of the research? The expert's decision on a 'non-alarming information' communication strategy to me remains potentially conflicting with regard to transparency and the right to know. I propose more clarification here. About the abstract: the concluding part to me remains unclear. I expect their strategy of non-alarming information to be discussed here more clearly in relation to transparency and right to know, and their ideas about improvements with regard to communication of limited knowledge on risks. About the stakeholder issue in the conclusion: ok.

In conclusion:

- I would appreciate some comments of the authors on the issue of discussing and communicating limited knowledge on risks with reference to the field of risk communication. This may have to do with difference of opinion between my view and the author's views, thus I would appreciate clarification, but do not want to pose this as a major compulsory revision.

- I would appreciate more clarification on the issues mentioned under 3, also in the concluding part in the abstract.

Kind regards, Hans Keune

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 declare that I have no competing interests