

Author's response to reviews

Title: Mercury from chlor-alkali plants: measured concentrations in food product sugar

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Author's response to reviews: see over

December 21, 2008

Dear Editors of *Environmental Health*,

Attached please find the revised manuscript with the changes you requested. Below please find a point-by-point response to your comments:

Editor: “Please consider whether the issue of mercury contamination during food production may be an international concern. In regard to the EU, increased mercury concentrations were found, e.g., in (non-alcoholic) beverages (see reference following this paragraph).

SCOOP Report from Task 3.2.11, Assessment of the dietary exposure to arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury of the population of the EU Member States, 2004. http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/scoop_3-2-11_heavy_metals_report_en.pdf “

Our Response: We have added the following sentence to the Conclusions section:

In 2004, several member states of the European Union reported finding mercury concentrations in beverages, cereals and bakery ware, and sweeteners [29].

In addition, we have added the SCOOP Report as reference 29. We have also inserted the word “International” in the sentence “Current **International** food processing standards allow 1.0 µg mercury/g caustic soda [27, 28].....

Editor: Please remove the pagination. Our Response: Done.

Editor: On the title page, the title should be free standing without the word “title” – please remove. Our Response: Done.

Editor: The authors should be listed sequentially separated by commas. The corresponding author’s name should be noted with an asterisk. Please use numerical superscripts to indicate the author’s affiliation with a key for the superscripts below. Please type the word “email” and underneath list the emails sequentially separated by semi-colons. See a recently accepted manuscript for illustration.

Our Response: Done.

Editor: Remove the first sentence of the abstract and the first six words of the sentence “During the course.....” Our Response: Done.

Editor: Please use the Greek letter μ when indicating results in micrograms, throughout. Our Response: Done.

Editor: Also, the Hg should be removed, and the text should clarify that all results are in terms of total mercury. Our Response: “Hg” has been removed throughout the

manuscript and the word “mercury” has been inserted in its place. The text now clarifies in several places that all results are in total mercury.

Editor: The unit “ppm” is not allowable and should be substituted by mg/kg.
Our Response: Done.

Editor: Please check the style for headings and any subheadings (avoid caps). Also the first section Introduction does not need a subheading.
Our Response: Done. (caps removed and subheading under Introduction removed).

Editor: Please consider changing the heading DISCUSSION to Implications.
Our Response: Done. DISCUSSION changed to “Implications.”

Editor: The last main section should be “Conclusions” (plural).
Our Response: Done. Last main section entitled “Conclusions” (plural).

Editor: A list of Abbreviations used in the MS should be inserted.
Our Response: All abbreviations are defined within the text before use. Did we miss something?

Editor: A statement about conflict of interests needs to be included along with a section titled authors’ contributions.
Our Response: Done. This statement is included at the end of the MS along with a section titled authors’ contributions.

Editor: The information currently listed under DISCLAIMER can be moved to the Acknowledgment section. Delete the word “DISCLAIMER.”
Our Response: Done. The information has been moved to the Acknowledgment section and the word “DISCLAIMER” has been deleted.

Editor: The references should be left aligned and not tabbed.
Our Response: Done. References now left aligned.

Editor: Remove List of Tables.
Our Response: Done. List of Tables removed.

Editor: The table needs a line at the bottom. Please insert the sign < before DL and explain the abbreviation in a footnote.
Our Response: Done. Table changes made as requested.

We look forward to hearing back from you soon. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional concerns.

Sincerely,
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