

Letter for Publication

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The letters editor

The Daily Mail

Dear Sir,

Golden Rice is designed to help combat Vitamin A deficiency, which kills 6,000 people every day. The problem is especially severe in areas of the world where rice is the staple diet. Vitamin A deficiency particularly affects children, who are unable to develop their potential mental capacity, impairing them for life, even if they do not succumb to illnesses or blindness.

Golden Rice is enhanced with nutrients (beta-carotene) which can be converted by the human body to form Vitamin A. This nutrient occurs naturally in leafy vegetables and other crops which are a routine part of a more balanced diet.

The effects of beta-carotene on animals are already well documented. Animals do not metabolise beta-carotene in the same way as humans. Further trials with animals would therefore be meaningless, to understand human bioavailability of beta-carotene, and conversion of beta-carotene to Vitamin A. *Golden Rice* has been screened to show absence of allergens and there is no evidence that GM food can cause damaging gene mutations.

The trials were designed to investigate the comparative bioavailability and bioconversion of beta-carotene to understand how *Golden Rice* can complement other interventions in combating Vitamin A Deficiency. Using the correct Chinese and US government approved processes, the trials in China went ahead last year with the formal approval of their parents and the understanding of the children. There is no possible way the trials could do any harm to the participants. Indeed, all three groups of children received something to assist their mild Vitamin A Deficiency – either *Golden Rice*, or spinach, or beta-carotene capsules. All three groups therefore benefited.

Neither the letter or the spirit of the Nuremberg Code were contravened with these tests. Indeed, similar beta-carotene supplementation trials have previously been carried out by academic institutions where consenting children have been engaged.

Yours Faithfully,

Adrian Dubock

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