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Reply to letter to the editor

Controversy over the use of creatine as a safe dietary supplement

In our research (Timcheh-Hariri et al., 2012), we reported the results of biochemical and serological findings of 20 male body-builders who developed hepatitis due to long-term simultaneous use of T Bomb II, an optimizer of testosterone; Cell Tech, an amino acid and creatine-based supplement and Phosphagen, a creatine supplement. They had taken these supplements at doses recommended by the manufacturers. Causality assessment with the CIOMS (Council for International Organization Medical Sciences) scale showed a “possible” grade of causality of hepatocellular injury for these supplements. Since they had taken different products simultaneously, we were unable to distinguish which of these compounds has been the leading cause of hepatotoxicity.

In contrast to Wallimann’s certainty about safe use of creatine as a dietary supplement, we believe that it should also be taken with care for the following reasons:

- (1) There are several reports on the hepatotoxic effect of creatine-based supplements (Duarte et al., 2001; Keys et al., 2001; Tarnopolsky et al., 2003; Bizzarini and De Angelis, 2004; Souza et al., 2009).
- (2) Even if creatine considers as a safe supplement; it would have dose-dependent effects like many other dietary supplements. According to our study, two of the supplements taken by the patients had creatine as their ingredients. Therefore, the patients might be affected by the over-usage of creatine.
- (3) Combination use of creatine with other supplements might cause some unwanted reactions that we are unaware about them.
- (4) If Phosphagen is a safe dietary supplement why it has not been approved by US-FDA (United States-food and drug administraton).

Considering the above points, we cannot confirm the creatine as a completely safe supplement and it remains a controversial topic.

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