Response to Letter Regarding Article, “Dietary Flavonoids and Risk of Stroke in Women”

Response: We thank Olié et al.1 for their comments on our article and for highlighting the importance of conducting further research on the relative importance of different flavonoid subclasses in relation to risk of cardiovascular disease. We constructed a comprehensive database of flavonoid subclasses that was based on the latest information available from the US Department of Agriculture at the time with additional input from European Union sources/literature2 and constructed before the release of the Phenol Explorer data set.3 After significant discussion, we derived a nomenclature for the classification of the subclasses, which we felt optimally represented the available compositional data. The relative importance of different flavonoids for health remains in its infancy and for many subclasses, we still understand little about their bioactivity and relative bioavailability let alone their composition. For the future, we need to continue to carefully evaluate all available composition databases, ensure they are robust, be aware of their limitations, and integrate composition data like phenol explorer to help us to further refine and harmonize flavonoid composition for epidemiological research. Like for other dietary constituents, including the carotenoids, fatty acids, and vitamin E, composition data have evolved and improved over the last decade allowing a more detailed understanding of the relative importance of the individual constituents. Harmonized composition data together with an increased understanding of the mechanisms of action of the different subclasses will allow us to further unravel the relative importance of the different flavonoid subclasses for cardiovascular health.

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