

Greenpeace misleads on golden rice

By ACSH Staff — September 17, 2012

Last month, we [reported](#) [1] on a study demonstrating the hugely beneficial effects of genetically modified golden rice that provided children in China with adequate levels of vitamin A. For the study, which was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in August, researchers from Tufts Medical Center and the Zhejiang Academy of Medical Sciences in China looked at 68 children and found that, based on blood tests taken over three weeks, golden rice was as effective as vitamin A supplements and worked even better than spinach to provide kids with vitamin A.

And since vitamin A deficiency kills 670,000 children under five each year while causing blindness in an additional 250,000 to 500,000, the genetically modified golden rice has been heralded as a major public health breakthrough.

But thanks to the activists at Greenpeace, access to this promising product, which was developed over a decade ago, may be even further delayed. That's because the group is claiming that the study researchers did not obtain consent from the children or their parents, and thus these unsuspecting participants were put at risk in a dangerous study of genetically engineered rice.

However, in a [recent op-ed featured on MSNBC](#) [2], Dr. Art Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, admonishes Greenpeace for being ethically irresponsible and putting those lives at continued risk. The group, he says, should stick to protecting the whales and oceans, since charges against GM foods are widely outside of their jurisdiction. GMO food has been eaten by almost everyone reading this column for years, Dr. Caplan writes. No study has shown any health danger.

Dr. Caplan further reviewed the original research article and found that the study protocol had been approved by regulatory agencies in the U.S. and China and that both parents and children had consented to participate in the study.

That makes the Greenpeace allegations that much more infuriating. These activists not only lied, says ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava, but as far as I'm concerned, they're also complicit in the deaths of many thousands of children in the developing world lives that golden rice has the potential to save.

It's amazing how, when environmental groups attempt to weigh in on human health issues, they always come down on the wrong side of everything, says ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom. They should go pick up gum wrappers at Coney Island and stay out of medicine.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2012/09/17/greenpeace-misleads-on-golden-rice>

Links

[1] <http://www.acsh.org/a-golden-age-of-rice/>

[2] http://vitals.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/09/14/13863010-greenpeace-out-to-sea-on-gm-rice-issue-bioethicist-says?lite