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TITLE:

Using Deuterium Oxide as a Non-Invasive, Non-Lethal Tool for Assessing Body Composition and Water Consumption in Mammals

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KEYWORDS:

animals, bat, body composition, chiroptera, cat, carnivore, deuterium oxide, endangered species, health status, insectivore, lean muscle mass, minimally invasive

SUMMARY:

This article describes the deuterium oxide dilution technique in two mammals, an insectivore and carnivore, to determine total body water, lean body mass, body fat mass, and water consumption.

ABSTRACT:

Body condition scoring systems and body condition indices are common techniques used for assessing the health status or fitness of a species. Body condition scoring systems are evaluator dependent and have the potential to be highly subjective. Body condition indices can be confounded by foraging, the effects of body weight, as well as statistical and inferential problems. An alternative to body condition scoring systems and body condition indices is using a stable isotope such as deuterium oxide to determine body composition. The deuterium oxide dilution method is a repeatable, quantitative technique used to estimate body composition in humans, wildlife, and domestic species. Additionally, the deuterium oxide dilution technique can be used to determine the water consumption of an individual animal. Here, we describe the adaption of

the deuterium oxide dilution technique for assessing body composition in big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) and for assessing water consumption in cats (*Felis catis*).

INTRODUCTION:

Body condition scoring systems and body condition indices are common techniques used for assessing the health status or fitness of a species^{1,2}. Many domestic and zoological species have unique body condition scoring (BCS) systems that are used to assess an animal's muscle and superficial fatty tissue³. However, BCS assessment relies upon the evaluator—meaning that BCS is an objective or semiquantitative measurement when assessed by a trained evaluator. In wildlife species, body condition indices are commonly used rather than BCS and are based upon a ratio of body mass to body size or body mass to forearm². Body condition indices are often confounded by the effects of foraging and can be confounded by body size as well as statistical and inferential problems⁴.

An alternative to body condition scoring systems and body condition indices is using a stable isotope to determine body composition. One commonly used stable isotope is deuterium oxide (D₂O), a non-radioactive form of water in which the hydrogen atoms are deuterium isotopes. The deuterium oxide dilution method described in this study can be a non-subjective, quantitative, and repeatable technique used to estimate body composition in humans⁵ and a wide range of species^{4,6,7}. This technique can be advantageous for studying the body composition in wildlife. For example, it can be used to assess longitudinal changes in body composition, such as before and after a management action. However, in some wildlife species deuterium oxide can overestimate the actual water content⁸. Therefore, when adapting the technique for a species, it is important to validate the method by comparing the deuterium oxide method to carcass analysis for non-endangered species. For threatened and endangered species, a non-destructive method such as dual x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) should be considered as an alternative comparison method to the gold-standard destructive method of complete carcass analysis.

In addition to body composition, the D₂O dilution technique can be used to determine the water consumption of an individual animal⁹. This unique application of D₂O can be used to answer not only research questions, but can be useful for assessing the water consumption of individual animal(s) housed in large social settings.

Here, we describe the adaption of the D₂O dilution technique for assessing body composition in an insectivore, big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*), and for assessing water consumption in a carnivore, cats (*Felis catis*).

PROTOCOL:

All experiments described here were approved by the University of Missouri Animal Care and Use Committee and conducted under the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Wildlife Scientific Collection permit (Permit #16409 and #17649).

1. Preparation of sterile, isotonic, salinated D₂O stock solution

1.1. Make a 50 mL stock solution of 9.0 g/L salinated D₂O.

1.1.1. Weigh 450 mg of pharmaceutical grade NaCl and transfer all NaCl into a 100 mL, sterilized beaker. Record the exact amount of NaCl to 4 decimal places in the laboratory notebook.

1.1.2. Using a sterile graduated cylinder, measure 50 g of ≥ 99.8% deuterium oxide and transfer to the sterile beaker containing the NaCl. Record the exact amount of deuterium oxide to 4 decimal places in the laboratory notebook or spreadsheet.

1.1.3. Filter 10 mL of isosmotic strength NaCl (9.0 g/L) through a non-pyrogenic sterile disk filter with submicron pores (0.2 μm).

1.1.4. Attach a 20 G needle to the non-pyrogenic sterile disk filter with submicron pores (0.2 μm) fitted with a 10 mL syringe barrel. Insert into the septum of a 100 mL sterile empty vial.

1.1.5. Attach a vacuum tube to a 22 G needle and insert the needle into the septum of the 100 mL sterile empty vial.

1.1.6. Pour 10 mL of the stock solution into the syringe barrel. Slowly turn on the vacuum until the D₂O stock solution begins to slowly filter into the sterile vial. Continue to pour the D₂O stock solution into the syringe barrel until all 50 mL is filtered.

NOTE: The stock solution may need to be diluted or concentrated depending on the dose required. The dose of D₂O will vary based upon the species and the sensitivity of the analytical method. For cats, the working solution was used to administer a dose of 0.7 g/kg D₂O. The stock solution described above minimizes the amount of NaCl solution introduced subcutaneously to the animal while still allowing accurate measurement of the dose. For small mammals such as bats, this concentration must be diluted to a working solution such as 0.1600 g/mL. This concentration allows the dose of 0.75 g/kg D₂O to be accurately measured and administered in approximately 100 μL or less NaCl solution.

2. Preparation of sterile, isotonic, salinated D₂O stock working solution for bats

2.1. Weigh a 10 mL empty sterile vial and record weight to nearest 4 decimal places. Tare scale.

2.2. Use a 1.0 mL syringe to transfer 0.65 mL of the D₂O stock solution to the tared, 10 mL empty sterile vial. Record weight of D₂O to 4 decimal places. Tare scale.

2.3. Calculate the volume of D₂O in the 10 mL empty vial. Use the following equation.

$$V = W/D$$

where *W* is recorded weight and *D* is the density of 99.8% D₂O (1.107 g/mL).

2.4. Use the calculated volume and known weight of the D₂O to determine the volume of isotonic

saline required to make ~0.1600 g/mL working solution.

2.5. Insert into the septum of the 10 mL sterile vial, the 22 G needle (attached to the vacuum tube). Insert into the septum of the 10 mL sterile vial, the 20 G needle (attached to a 0.22 μ m syringe filter fitted with a 10 mL syringe barrel).

2.6. Pour the calculated mass/volume of isotonic NaCl into the syringe barrel and turn on the vacuum to allow a slow drip into the sterile 10 mL vial.

2.7. Record the weight of the vial and ensure a ~0.1600 g/mL working solution is created.

3. Determination of body composition of big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) with D₂O

NOTE: The stock solution of D₂O used in the protocol is 0.1598 g/mL. Before collecting blood, ensure that removing up to 200 μ L of blood will be \leq 10% of the total blood volume of the bat and is within the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee's (IACUC) established guidelines for blood collection. All animals should be fasted or abdomen palpated to ensure an empty stomach. A recent meal could alter the animal's weight resulting in confounded results since calculations for determining body fat rely upon the body mass of the animal.

3.1. Anesthetize a big brown bat.

3.1.1. Use 5.0% isoflurane for induction. Maintain a stable plane of anesthesia using 0.5%–3.0% isoflurane.

3.1.2. Determine proper anesthesia depth by testing the pedal withdrawal reflex (pinching the bat's toes). The bat should not respond to the sensation and the respiratory rate should remain slow and stable. Adjust isoflurane as needed to maintain a stable plane of anesthesia.

3.1.3. Record isoflurane level, heart rate, respiratory rate, and other information as required by IACUC.

3.2. Weigh the big brown bat and record the weight to 4 decimal places.

3.3. Clean the urotagium (tail membrane) over the interfemoral vein with an alcohol prep pad and allow to dry. Apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly over the interfemoral vein.

3.4. Use a 29 G needle to puncture the dorsal portion of the interfemoral vein and collect 100 μ L of blood using plastic sodium heparin capillary tubes. Ensure adequate mixing of the whole blood with the sodium heparin by gently rolling each tube after collection and label the tube.

3.5. Using a DXA machine calibrated for small mammals, obtain three DXA scans of the bat¹⁰.

3.6. Determine the mass (in g) of D₂O to inject by multiplying the bat weight in kg by the D₂O

dose of 0.75 g/kg. Determine the volume of the calculated D₂O dose (V) by dividing the weight of the D₂O dose by the concentration of the working solution.

$$dose = weight(kg) \times \frac{0.75 \text{ g}}{kg}$$

$$V = dose (g) \div working \text{ solution concentration } (\frac{g}{mL})$$

3.7. Use an insulin syringe with a 29 G needle attached to draw up the volume of D₂O calculated. Weigh the D₂O, insulin syringe, and needle. Record to 4 decimal places.

3.8. Inject the D₂O subcutaneously over the dorsal hip region of the anesthetized bat.

3.9. Allow bat to recover from anesthesia and record the time of injection.

3.10. Immediately after injection, weigh the now empty insulin syringe with the 29 G needle attached. Record the weight to 4 decimal places.

3.11. Determine the dose of D₂O injected by subtracting the post-injection weight of the insulin syringe from the pre-injection D₂O filled insulin syringe. Record to 4 decimal places.

3.12. Within 30 min post blood collection, use a hematocrit centrifuge to spin each capillary tube for 5 min. If the hematocrit centrifuge allows multiple speeds, set to 10,000 x g.

3.13. Use a sharp scissors to cut the plastic capillary tube between the whole blood and plasma. Use a 200 µL pipette to expel the plasma directly into a labelled, 500 µL storage tube.

3.14. After the equilibration period, collect another 100 µL of blood from the interfemoral vein.

NOTE: The equilibration period will vary by species and if the bats go into torpor. For big brown bats, typically 2 h is sufficient for the equilibration period.

3.15. Separate plasma into a second labelled, 500 µL microcentrifuge screw top tube by repeating step 3.13. Store samples at -20 °C or colder until analysis.

4. Fourier-transform infrared spectrophotometry analysis

4.1. Set the temperature of a sand bath to 60 °C to facilitate distillation (allow separation of water and D₂O from other blood components).

4.2. Pipette 50 µL of each plasma sample and standard onto the inside of a 1.5 mL conical microcentrifuge tube cap. Including standards containing known concentrations of D₂O as quality control.

NOTE: Ideally each animal will have three replicates per sample and the average of the three replicates reported. Due to the limited sample volume and the volume of sample required for the FT-IR equipment utilized by the authors, no replicates were performed for the bat samples. If any sample contains less than 50 μL of plasma, pipette the sample amount onto the conical microcentrifuge tube cap and record the volume.

4.3. Keep the microcentrifuge cap upside down and screw the 1.5 mL conical microcentrifuge tube onto the cap. Place the inverted (upside-down) tube with the cap in contact with the sand in the sand bath for a minimum of 12 h (overnight).

4.4. After 12 h, remove the cap and replace with a new, clean cap. Pulse the microcentrifuge tube for 10 s in a centrifuge.

4.5. Create the following standards: 0 ppm (0 mg D_2O in 1 L distilled water), 293 ppm (293 mg D_2O in 1 L distilled water), 585 ppm (585 mg D_2O in 1 L distilled water), 878 ppm (878 mg D_2O in 1 L distilled water), and 1170 ppm D_2O (1170 mg D_2O in 1 L distilled water).

NOTE: The values above are suggested for a standard curve. Alternative values such as 250 ppm, 500 ppm, 750 ppm, and so forth can be used.

4.6. Install a liquid transmission cell into the Fourier-transform infrared spectrophotometry (FTIR) spectrometer (**Table of Materials**). Fill the cell with methanol and connect the injection port. Slowly fill the cell with background water while carefully removing the methanol syringe to reduce the risk of air bubbles. Attach tubing to the output port to allow removal of the samples post-analysis.

4.7. Prepare the FTIR spectrometer software (**Table of Materials**) for analysis of D_2O in water. The parameter settings for the spectrometer software used in this protocol are listed in **Table 1**.

4.8. Collect a background sample using the diluent, 0.22 μm -filtered, distilled water. This should be the same water used for the standards.

4.9. Inject 40 μL of the 0 ppm D_2O and record the spectra. Save the spectra as a comma separated values (CSV) file.

4.10. Continue to inject and save the spectra of all standards to create a standard curve.

4.11. Repeat the background and standard curve every 60–90 min.

4.12. Inject 40 μL of each distilled sample into the liquid transmission cell and save the spectra.

NOTE: Alter the injection volume of the standards and distilled samples based upon the volume of liquid transmission cell. Use a smaller volume liquid transmission cell if the sample volume is

below 40 µL or dilute 1:1 with background distilled water.

4.13. Determine the concentration of D₂O of each sample from the FTIR spectra using a spreadsheet program as described by Jennings et al.¹¹ or the spectral software. When replicates are performed, use the average concentration to calculate the body composition.

5. Calculation of body composition

5.1. Convert the deuterium enrichment (ppm) to atom percent concentration for each sample using the following equation¹²:

$$Atom \% = 100 \times 0.0001557 \times \left(\frac{x}{1000} + 1 \right) / \left(1 + 0.0001557 \times \left(\frac{x}{1000} + 1 \right) \right)$$

where x is the measured deuterium enrichment (ppm) of the sample and 0.0001557 is the mole fraction of deuterium reported in Vienna Standard Mean Ocean Water (VSMOW)¹³.

5.2. Calculate total body water for each sample using the following equation^{4,12,14}:

$$S(g) = 18 \times \left(\left(100 \times 0.998 \times \left(\frac{B}{20} \right) \right) / E \right) - \left(0.998 \times \left(\frac{B}{20} \right) \right) - \left(0.001 \times \left(\frac{B}{18} \right) \right)$$

where E is the measured enrichment (atom%) of deuterium in the sample after background correction, B is the injection mass in g, and 0.998 is the concentration of injected D₂O.

NOTE: Deuterium exchange with labile hydrogen causes a 2% overestimation of total body water mass. Total body water should be corrected by reducing the total body water mass estimate by 2% of the body weight.

5.3. Estimate the fat-free mass (lean body mass and all other non-fat components) of each bat using the following equation:

$$fat-free\ mass\ (g) = \frac{weight(g)}{Fractional\ moisture\ content\ of\ lean\ body\ mass}$$

NOTE: Use the conventionally accepted value of 0.732 for the fractional moisture content of lean body mass for healthy, euhydrated, non-lactating bats. The fractional moisture content of fat-free mass can change in lactating big browns based upon the post-partum week¹⁵. For other species, use the values published in the literature or determine the fractional moisture content of lean body mass prior to performing calculations of the lean body mass.

5.4. Estimate the body fat mass using the following equation:

$$body\ fat\ mass\ (g) = body\ weight\ (g) - fat-free\ mass(g)$$

5.5. Convert the body fat mass in g to percent body fat mass using the following equation:

$$\text{body fat mass (\%)} = \frac{\text{body fat mass (g)}}{\text{body weight (g)}} \times 100$$

6. Determination of water composition in a carnivore (*Felis catus*, domestic cat)

6.1. Prepare the stock solution as described in section 1.

6.2. Weigh each cat to the nearest 3 decimal places and record weight. Calculate the dose for each cat as described in step 3.6 using a D₂O dose of 0.70 g/kg.

6.3. Prepare each dose as described in steps 3.7–3.8. using a 3 mL or 5 mL syringe with a 22 G needle instead of an insulin syringe.

6.4. Collect 500 µL of whole blood and subsequently administer subcutaneously the 0.7 g/kg D₂O. Centrifuge whole blood at 2,000 x g for 15 min and store plasma in 1.5 mL microcentrifuge screw top tubes at -20°C until analysis.

6.5. Collect 500 µL of whole blood 4 h post-injection. Centrifuge whole blood at 2,000 x g for 15 min and store plasma in 1.5 mL microcentrifuge screw top tubes at -20 °C until analysis.

6.8. Collect 500 µL of whole blood 14 days post-injection. Centrifuge whole blood at 2,000 x g for 15 min and store plasma in 1.5 mL microcentrifuge screw top tubes at -20 °C until analysis.

NOTE: The number of days between blood collection can be based upon the experimental needs and the post-injection period in which D₂O can be detected above the background levels. Fourteen days was the length of the dietary treatment blocks from Hooper et al.⁹.

6.9. Perform FT-IR analysis according to section 4 and calculate the body composition according to section 5 of this protocol.

6.10. Calculate the water consumption in mL/day using the following equations:

$$\text{body water loss} = \text{TBW (kg)} \times \frac{(\text{initial } D_2O \text{ (ppm)} - \text{final } D_2O \text{ (ppm)})}{\text{initial } D_2O \text{ (ppm)}}$$

$$\text{Fractional change in } H_2O = \log_e \frac{\text{final } D_2O \text{ (ppm)}}{\text{initial } D_2O \text{ (ppm)}} / \text{days} \times (-1)$$

$$\text{water consumption} \left(\frac{\text{ml}}{\text{day}} \right) = \text{Fractional change in } H_2O \times \text{initial TBW}$$

where TBW is total body water, initial D₂O and final D₂O are the concentrations measured in ppm in the post-injection D₂O samples.

REPRESENTATIVE RESULTS:

The deuterium oxide dilution technique can be used to assess the body composition of a variety of species. To demonstrate the adaptability, we are reporting the first use of the deuterium oxide dilution technique in a North American insectivorous bat species, *Eptesicus fuscus*, the big brown bat for representative results. A timing plateau was completed by taking pre- and post-D₂O injection blood samples as should be done with any species where the equilibration period is unknown. It was determined that two hours post-injection in non-torpid bats was adequate for equilibration. With the equilibration time known, the total body water, lean body mass, and body fat mass for 13 wild-caught big brown bats and 8 captive big brown bats were determined (**Table 2**). An additional 2 wild-caught big brown bats and 5 captive big brown bats were determined to have a negative body fat mass. A negative body fat mass is calculated due to one or more of the following reasons: not receiving the entire dose of deuterium oxide, becoming torpid during the equilibration phase, having abnormally large fat masses and minimal lean mass, or bats having under 3%–5% body fat as determined by DXA (**Table 3**).

White-nose syndrome has caused many bat species to decline, so the technique was compared to the body fat measured using DXA. **Figure 1** shows the percentage of body fat determined by the D₂O dilution technique and DXA (n = 19). The two techniques were well correlated with a Pearson's $r = 0.897$ (**Figure 2**) and were not statistically different (one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), F-value = 0.366, $p = 0.549$). The body fat showed strong correlations between body fat and body weight (**Figure 3**). The D₂O dilution technique did not consistently over or underestimate the body fat mass.

The deuterium oxide method has been previously validated in cats¹⁶. **Table 4** shows an example of the total body water, lean body mass, and body fat mass of a single cat⁹. Hooper et al.⁹ was the first to report the use of deuterium oxide dilution to measure the water consumption of socially housed animals with the daily water consumption of the cats during each dietary block of the experiment, as shown in **Figure 4**.

FIGURE AND TABLE LEGENDS:

Figure 1: Deuterium oxide and DXA line plot. Each point represents the body fat percentage of an individual bat as determined by DXA or deuterium oxide. The mean is the light green point with error bars indicating the standard error of the mean.

Figure 2: Percentage of body fat in big brown bats. Deming regression (solid blue line, Pearson's $r = 0.897$) comparing the percentage of body fat determined by DXA (x-axis, the reference method) and the percentage of body fat determined by deuterium oxide (y-axis, the test method) in big brown bats with 95% confidence intervals designated by gray shading. The green dashed identity line drawn represents the regression line when the methods are equal.

Figure 3: Percentage of body fat in big brown bats compared to body weight. Body weight of each bat plotted against the body fat percentage determined by D₂O or DXA. A strong correlation exists between the body weight and body fat as determined by DXA (dark blue line, Pearson's $r = 0.88$) and D₂O (blue line, Pearson's $r = 0.86$).

Figure 4: Water consumption of socially housed cats. Representative results of the daily water consumption of socially housed cats during an experiment evaluating the effects of dietary constituents on water consumption. This figure has been modified from Hooper et al.⁹.

Table 1: Spectral software settings. Parameter settings used for spectral recording software.

Table 2: Body composition of big brown bats. The representative results of total body water, lean body mass, and body fat as determined by deuterium oxide dilution in big brown bats are shown in columns 5–8. Representative results of the lean body mass plus bone mineral content and body fat as determined by DXA in the same big brown bats are shown in columns 9–11.

Table 3: Body composition of big brown bats. Representative results from bats that did not receive the entire dose of deuterium oxide, became torpid during the equilibration phase, bats with abnormally large fat mass and minimal lean mass, or bats under 3%–5% body fat as determined by DXA. The representative results of total body water, lean body mass, and body fat as determined by deuterium oxide dilution are shown in columns 5–8. Representative results of the lean body mass plus bone mineral content and body fat as determined by DXA are shown in columns 9–11.

Table 4: Body composition and water consumption in a single feline. Representative results of deuterium oxide dilutional technique for assessing the lean body mass, fat mass, and water consumption of one cat at three different time points during the study conducted by Hooper et al.⁹.

DISCUSSION:

The use of deuterium oxide to determine TBW has been used since the 1940s¹⁷ and is used in humans and a variety of domestic and wildlife species^{4,6,7}. Other non-destructive techniques have been developed including bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), DXA, and quantitative magnetic resonance (QMR). Each method has advantages and disadvantages that should be considered before selecting a particular methodology for assessing body composition. This protocol selected to use DXA as a comparison method for deuterium oxide to assess body composition, because the equipment is available as a core university resource with minimal cost, minimal time is required per scan (30 s per bat), and it is not sensitive to variables such as body temperature and skin insulation.

When adapting the deuterium oxide dilution technique to a species of interest, a pilot study should be initiated to determine the time required for equilibration¹⁸. This can be done by taking a background sample, and a blood sample every 15 minutes post-injection. For small species such as bats, several bats can be bled at the different time intervals instead of a single animal¹⁸. The

equilibration time can change when animals, such as bats, go into torpor, which explains why some of our animals had a negative percent body fat (**Table 3**). If a negative percent body fat is obtained, and the deuterium dose had sufficient time to fully equilibrate with the animal's body water, then it is likely the dose was not completely injected. Because the deuterium oxide dilution technique is highly dependent upon the full dose being administered and accurate recording of the amount of deuterium injected, this technique should only be completed by individuals skilled in performing injections. Additionally, anesthetizing or sedating animals can assist with ensuring the entire dose can be administered.

When administering the deuterium oxide, it is important to determine an appropriate concentration to administer to the animal. Using a 0.7 g/kg dose for the cats, the stock solution concentration was appropriate, whereas for the big brown bats a 0.75 g/kg dose required the stock solution of deuterium oxide to be diluted. When diluting the stock solution, an isotonic solution such as 0.9% NaCl should be used. To avoid altering the total body water of small mammals, dilute the dose of deuterium oxide as minimally as possible, just enough to ensure the dose can be measured accurately.

The doses presented here are detectable using FTIR spectrometry. FTIR spectrometry is less expensive and easier to maintain, but not as sensitive as isotope ratio mass spectrometry (IRMS)^{19,20}. FTIR spectrometry can be used to measure deuterium enrichment in plasma and saliva, but it is not recommended to use an FTIR transmission cell to analyze deuterium enrichment in urine¹⁹. If urine is the desired sample type, then an attenuated total reflection (ATR) attachment should be used with the FTIR or IRMS should be used to assess deuterium enrichment for calculation of TBW¹⁹.

Additionally, the doses used for the cats were adequate to allow detection of deuterium oxide 14 days post-injection. Because the concentration of the deuterium oxide 14 days post-injection was detectable, the water consumption of the cats could be calculated (**Figure 4**). This innovative use of deuterium oxide can be employed in field studies to measure body water turnover for species with high recapture rates or for animals housed in groups in ex situ or laboratory studies. However, before employing in field studies, researchers must assess if the animal can be captured and held for the duration of the equilibration period. This prolong handling period is one of the disadvantages of the deuterium oxide technique and could be problematic as many endangered species permits limit the duration that a particular animal can be held. Additionally, animals cannot have recently eaten as the washout technique relies upon the measurement of body mass; therefore, a recent meal can confound the results. An additional consideration is whether an animal must be anesthetized or sedated for subcutaneous injection and blood collections or if the animal can be restrained without sedation/anesthesia. It has been suggested that the rate of body water turnover could be a significant indicator for human health²¹. The increased water consumption in cat 5 (**Figure 4**) was documented before traditional biochemical marks of renal failure, and concentrations of creatinine and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) were elevated, suggesting that body water turnover could also be an indicator of health in animals.

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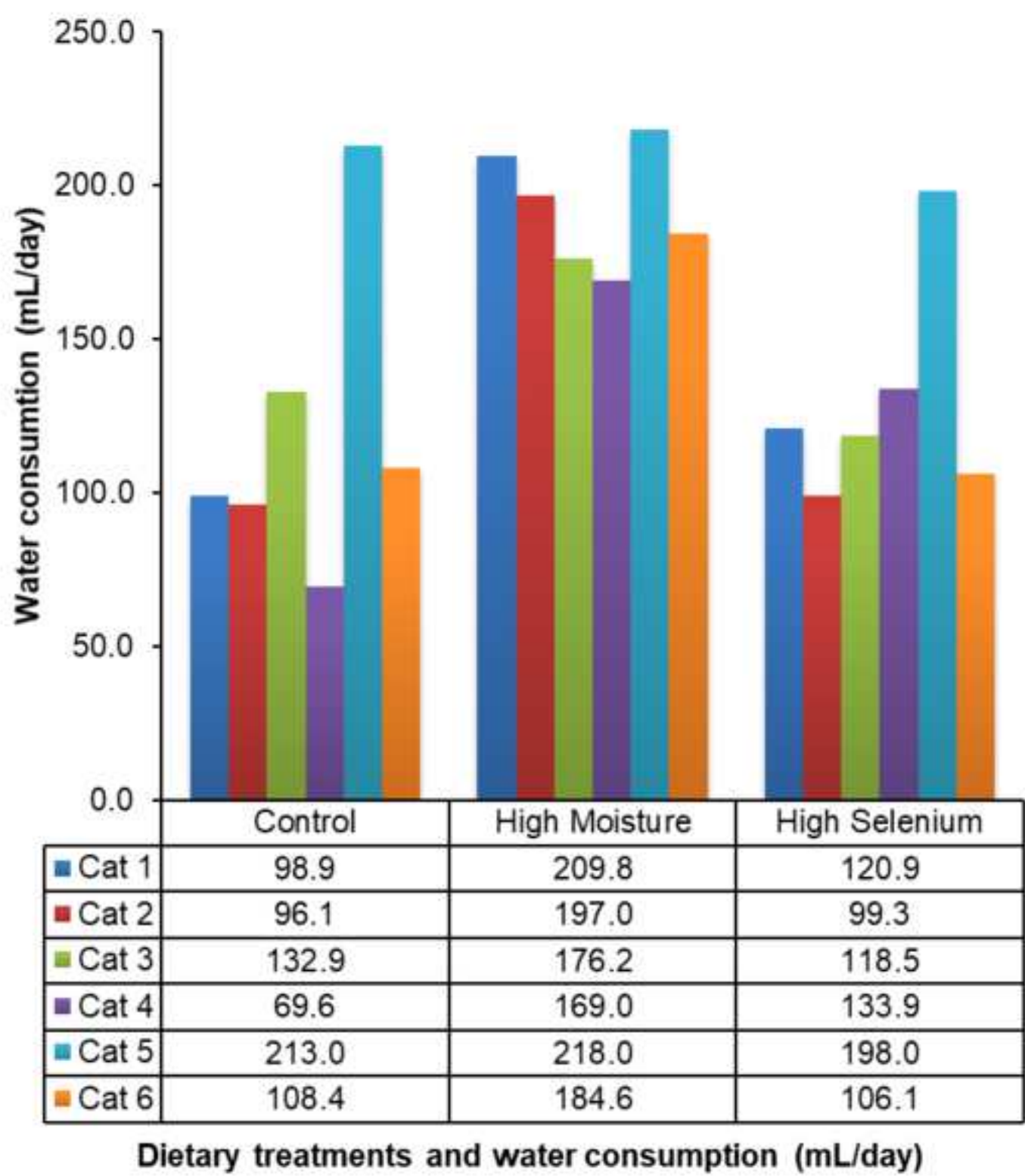
DISCLOSURES:

The authors have nothing to disclose.

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Parameter	Setting
Number of scans	64
Resolution	2
Data spacing	0.946 cm ⁻¹
Final format	Absorbance
Correction	None
Use fixed Y-axis limits in collection window	Min -0.01, Max 0.03
Bench range	Max 6.38, Min -5.02, Loc 1024
Total absorbing peak sensitivity	50
fringes or channeling sensitivity	80
Derivative peaks sensativity	51
Baseline error sensitivity	50
CO2 levels sensitivity	19
H2O levels sensitivity	19
Apodization mode	Happ-Genzel
Phase correction	Mertz
Filters set based upon	velocity
low pass filter	11,000
high pass filter	20

Animal	Species	body weight (kg)	D ₂ O injected (g)	Total body water (g)	Lean body mass (g)	Body fat mass (g)	body fat mass (%)
1	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.01715	0.0740	11.80	16.15	1.00	5.80
2	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.01950	0.0920	13.80	18.83	0.69	3.50
3	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.01677	0.08	11.33	15.47	1.30	7.74
4	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.021292	0.097	12.51	17.09	4.20	19.7

DXA lean + bmc (g)	DXA fat (g)	DXA fat (%)
14.65	0.75	4.80
16.20	1.40	7.90
11.33	1.30	7.74
15.9	19.65	19.2

Animal	Species	body weight (kg)	D ₂ O injected (g)	Total body water (g)	Lean body mass (g)	Body fat mass (g)	body fat mass (%)
1	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.0277	0.1299	34.18	46.69	-19.02	-68.74
2	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.0185	0.0810388	64.23	87.75	-69.25	-374.33
3	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.0164	0.0719	17.38	23.74	-7.33	-44.68
4	<i>Eptesicus fuscus</i>	0.0212	0.0994	54.57	74.54	-53.37	-252.0

DXA lean + bmc (g)	DXA fat (g)	DXA fat (%)	Comment
9.90	26.55	62.80	Equilibration time insufficient
14.20	17.30	17.95	Full dose not injected
14.15	14.40	1.70	Less than 3% fat
16.41	19.01	13.65	Bat became torpid (cool to touch)

Block	Species	body weight (kg)	D ₂ O injected (g)	Total body water (kg)	Lean body mass (kg)	Body fat mass (kg)	body fat mass (%)	Daily water consumption (mL/day)
1	<i>Felis Catus</i>	4.830	3.36	2.69	3.68	1.149	23.8	96.8
2	<i>Felis Catus</i>	4.764	3.45	2.66	3.63	1.136	23.8	217.5
3	<i>Felis Catus</i>	4.727	3.25	2.50	3.41	1.314	27.8	125.1

Dietary Treatment
Control
High Moisture
High Selenium

Name of Material/Equipment	Company	Catalog Number
0.2 micron non-pyrogenic disk filter	Argos Technologies	FN32S
1.5 mL conical microcentrifuge tubes	USA Scientific	1415-9701
10 mL sterile glass vial for injection	Mountainside Medical Equipment	MS-SEV10
10 mL syringe	Becton Dickinson	305219
100 mL sterile glass vial for injection	Mountainside Medical Equipment	AL-SV10020
20 guage needle	Exel	26417
22 guage needle	Exel	26411
deuterium oxide	Sigma-Aldrich	151882-25G
isofluorane	Vetone	3060
OMNIC Spectra Software	ThermoFisher Scientific	833-036200
petroleum jelly	Vaseline	305212311006
plastic capillary tubes	Innovative Med Tech	100050
Sealed liquid spectrophotometer SL-3	International Crystal	
FTIR CAF2 Cell	Laboratory	0005D-875
sodium chloride	EMD Millipore	1.37017
Thermo Electron Nicolet 380 FT-IR Spectrometer	ThermoFisher Scientific	269-169400

Comments/Description

nylon, 30mm diameter, 0.22um, sterile
1.5 ml self-standing microcentrifuge tube, natural
with blue cap

clear, sterile glass injection unit
sterile 10 mL syringe individually wrapped

clear, sterile glass injection unit
needles hypodermic 20g x 1" plastic hub (yellow)
/ regular bevel
needles hypodermic 22g x 1" plastic hub (black) /
regular bevel
99.9 atom % D
fluriso isoflurane, USP
FT-IR standard software
Vaseline, 100% pure petroleum jelly, original,
skin protectant
sodium heparin anticoagulant, 50µL capacity, 30
mm length

0.05 mm Pathlength
suitable for biopharmaceutical production

discontinued model, newer models available

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Author(s):	Sarah E. Hooper, Amanda N. Eshelman, Ashley D. Cowan, Alicia Roistacher, Tyler S. Paneitz, Sybill K. Amelon

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Dear Editor and Reviewers,

We appreciate the constructive feedback on the manuscript “Using deuterium oxide as a non-invasive, non-lethal tool for assessing body composition and water composition in mammals”. The comments have been addressed individually, and appropriate changes have been made to the manuscript using track changes. We look forward to continuing the review processes.

Sincerely,

The authors

Editorial comments:

Changes to be made by the author(s) regarding the manuscript:

1. Please take this opportunity to thoroughly proofread the manuscript to ensure that there are no spelling or grammar issues.

We have reviewed the manuscript for spelling and grammar issues. Any errors were corrected and noted by the track changes function in Microsoft Word.

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The original signed Journal of Animal Physiology and Animal Nutrition copyright transfer agreement states figures may be reused in other publications. This will be uploaded as a PDF in the Editorial Manager for review by JOVE editors and staff. The lead and senior authors do not have the file in .doc or .docx format.

3. Figure and table legends: Please include a title and a description of each figure and/or table. All figures and/or tables showing data must include measurement definitions, scale bars, and error bars (if applicable).

We have revised the figure and table legends to include a title and applicable description.

4. Figure 1: Please describe what the error bars represent. What do the bright green and dark green dots represent?

We had added in the legend, “The mean is the light green point with error bars indicating the standard error of the mean.”

5. Figure 2: Please describe what the blue line, dashed green line and shaded area represent.

We have described the items listed above in the figure legend.

6. Table of Materials: Please revise the Table of Materials to include the name, company, and catalog number of all

relevant supplies, reagents, equipment and software in separate columns in an xls/xlsx file. Please sort the items in alphabetical order according to the name of material/equipment.

We have sorted the items in alphabetical order. Items with a numerical value (i.e. 10 mL syringe) are listed first. We have added the OMNIC Spectra Software and FTIR equipment.

7. JoVE cannot publish manuscripts containing commercial language. This includes trademark symbols (™), registered symbols (®), and company names before an instrument or reagent. Please remove all commercial language from your manuscript and use generic terms instead. All commercial products should be sufficiently referenced in the Table of Materials and Reagents. You may use the generic term followed by “(see table of materials)” to draw the readers’ attention to specific commercial names. Examples of commercial sounding language in your manuscript are: Microsoft Excel, Vaseline, OMNIC Spectra, etc.

We have revised the manuscript to eliminate use of commercial language except for the Table of Materials and Reagents.

8. Please revise the protocol text to avoid the use of any personal pronouns (e.g., "we", "you", "our" etc.).

We have revised the protocol text to reduce/eliminate the use of personal pronouns.

9. 3.1: Please mention how proper anesthetization is confirmed.

Step 3.1 now includes how proper anesthesia is confirmed.

10. 3.15: Please specify centrifugation parameters (force in x g and time).

Microhematocrit centrifuges typically only allow time adjustments and not speed adjustments. We listed the time, but now include additional information for centrifuges that allow multiple speeds.

11. 4.9.1-4.9.19: Please include all parameters in a table and reference the table in step 4.9.

We have created a reference table for all parameters in step 4.9.

12. Please combine some of the shorter Protocol steps so that individual steps contain 2-3 actions and maximum of 4 sentences per step.

We have combined the shorter protocol steps as requested.

13. Please include single-line spaces between all paragraphs, headings, steps, etc.

We have included single-line spaces between all paragraphs, headings, steps, etc.

14. After you have made all the recommended changes to your protocol (listed above), please highlight 2.75 pages or less of the Protocol (including headings and spacing) that identifies the essential steps of the protocol for the video, i.e., the steps that should be visualized to tell the most cohesive story of the Protocol.

Once track changes are accepted, the authors should have approximately 2.75 pages highlighted.

15. Please highlight complete sentences (not parts of sentences). Please ensure that the highlighted part of the step includes at least one action that is written in imperative tense. Notes cannot usually be filmed and should be excluded from the highlighting. Please do not highlight any steps describing anesthetization and euthanasia.

16. Please include all relevant details that are required to perform the step in the highlighting. For example: If step 2.5 is highlighted for filming and the details of how to perform the step are given in steps 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, then the

sub-steps where the details are provided must be highlighted.

17. Line 324: Please use a reference number for Hooper et al (2018) for in-text reference.

Reference number provided at the end of the sentence for line 324.

18. References: Please do not abbreviate journal titles.

The authors would like to note that the citation examples included references with abbreviated journal titles (i.e. J Med Chem), and recommend that it be changed to avoid confusion for other authors.

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1:

Manuscript Summary:

This study provides a good example of the use of deuterium oxide to measure body composition and water consumption in mammals. Overall the methods and conclusions are reasonable.

Major Concerns:

However, while the authors highlight many of the advantages of the use of deuterium oxide in measuring body composition they have neglected to mention many of the disadvantages in the use of deuterium oxide. Including prolonged handling times, skill in performing injections, and costs of purchasing isotopes and performing laboratory analyses. As the authors validate their body composition measures against measures determined by dual x-ray absorptiometry (DXA), some discussion on the pros and cons of deuterium oxide versus DXA (among other methods) is warranted.

We have included in the discussion that only skilled individuals should administer the deuterium oxide, considerations for prolong handling time, and considerations for sedation/anesthesia of an animal. The authors discuss that FT-IR spectrometry is less expensive than other methods. Deuterium oxide is typically considered an inexpensive method for body composition, and the readers can determine their costs by consulting the Table of Materials. We also highlight why we chose DXA. There are many excellent review articles that compare non-destructive body condition methodologies, and the authors do not believe a full discussion of all of these methods is relevant to the deuterium oxide protocol. The authors can provide suggestions of review articles to the readers if this is desired by the reviewer.

Minor Concerns:

Introduction:

Lines 55-57: But deuterium oxide relies on measures of body mass and hence it can also be confounded by recent feeding.

We have revised the discussion to expand upon the disadvantages of using deuterium oxide and addressed this comment in the discussion.

Line 66: No need to mention barnacle goose here. The inference is that the physiology of barnacle geese makes them unique when in fact it is the deuterium oxide technique itself that is imprecise and variable among species.

We revised the sentence to say, “However, in some wildlife species, deuterium oxide (D₂O) can overestimate actual water content.”

Methods:

Mention of the statistical tests performed would be helpful here.

The figure legends and results provide information on the statistical methods used. The statistical methods that readers will use depends upon how they incorporate deuterium oxide washout technique into their studies and their study design.

Results:

Lines 305-307: A figure showing the equilibration curve would be of interest.

We could provide a reference for a figure of a schematic illustration of theoretical enrichment if the reviewer and editor would find this of benefit to the readers. For our equilibration curve, we used different animals for each time point. Because the enrichment will be different in each animal due to their weight differences and different dosages, we assessed the timing based upon the timepoint with the highest level of agreement between DXA and deuterium oxide. This is difficult to visually graph for the readers, since many published examples of equilibration curves of deuterium enrichment are from repeated sampling of the same individual.

Line 320: Why use a One-way ANOVA instead of a paired t-test?

Since the t-test is a special case of one-way ANOVA, and the combined use of Deming regression and one-way ANOVA has been used widely in the literature for comparison of two or more diagnostic methodologies, we decided to use these statistical methods.

Reviewer #2:

Manuscript Summary:

First, my best wishes for this new year.

Clear and useful presentation on the technique and interesting data collection in this field.

Major Concerns:

No major concern

Minor Concerns:

- L54: BCS 9 point scale has been validated in cats (Laflamme, 1997) and shown to be accurate when used by trained observers (Bjørnvad et al , 2011; Borges et al, 2012...). As such, it would be considered as a semi quantitative/objective measure, not a subjective measure in trained observer. It is widely accepted and used in daily practice by vets as an easy tool.

We have revised this to read “ ..., however BCS assessment relies upon the evaluator—meaning BCS is an objective or semiquantitative measurement when assessed by a trained evaluator.

Bjørnvad, C. R., Nielsen, D. H., Armstrong, P. J., McEvoy, F., Hoelmkjaer, K. M., Jensen, K. S., ... & Kristensen, A. T. (2011). Evaluation of a nine-point body condition scoring system in physically inactive pet cats. *American Journal of Veterinary Research*, 72(4), 433-437.

Borges, N. C., Vasconcellos, R. S., Carciofi, A. C., Gonçalves, K. N., Paula, F. J., Faria Filho, D. E., & Canola, J. C. (2012). DXA, bioelectrical impedance, ultrasonography and biometry for the estimation of fat and lean mass in cats

during weight loss. BMC Veterinary Research, 8(1), 111.

Laflamme, D. (1997). Development and validation of a body condition score system for cats: a clinical tool. Feline practice (Santa Barbara, Calif.: 1990)(USA).

- L316-321: it would be interesting to add information about the discrepancy between the two techniques (over/underestimation)

We have included that the deuterium technique did not consistently under or overestimate the body fat mass in the representative results (L399-400).

- L391-394: It would be interesting to remind the reader that the assumption about an lean mass hydration coefficient of 73.2% is only available in healthy subjects. As soon as a disease is involved, especially those driving a water shift in the body, the body composition assessment, whatever the technique used, need to be seen with cautious.

We have revised the methods to include the suggestions of the reviewer and highlight that in bats, the lean mass hydration coefficient can be altered post-lactation.

Reviewer #3:

Manuscript Summary:

The manuscript details a protocol for the use of deuterium dilution for body composition and water turnover analysis in exemplar wildlife. The protocol is generally well written and easy to follow. I do query, however, the need or value for this protocol since there are already well-established and published protocols, for example the series of monographs published by the IAEA. In addition, the protocol is very specific, e.g., line 116 "transfer 0.65 mL" and line 110 0.1600 "g/mL". While these may be appropriate for the D2O technique in this particular species (bats), the technique is broadly applicable across many species where concentrations and dosages may differ. It would seem more appropriate to make the protocol more generic.

The lead author was asked by an editor to consider publishing the deuterium oxide washout technique that she used for measuring the water consumption in cats (Hooper et al 2018 reference). Because of the well-established and published protocols, we decided to show that the details that these general protocols lack and how using these general protocols they can be adapted for a species of interest. For those readers who are unfamiliar with the technique, the authors believe this level of detail is helpful. We also provide notes to the readers that certain concentrations like the stock solution can be used in mammals the size of domestic cats and for small mammals a working concentration would be required.

Aspects of the method are described without indication of purpose, for example what is the purpose of the sandbath heating?

We added "....to allow separation of water and deuterium oxide from other blood components (distillation)" to clarify why the sand bath is needed.

Major Concerns:

I have no major concerns regarding scientific validity of the described method but some points require attention.

Lines 109-11 and the methodology in general. The concentration of the working solution is to a large extent

immaterial. What is important is that the exact magnitude of the dose the animal receives is known and that this is administered in a volume insufficient to disturb body water volume. In practice the dose rate (expressed as D₂O g/kg body-weight) is often determined by the sensitivity of the analytical method being used. This point does not come across clearly.

We revised the note after section 1 to read “The stock solution may need to be diluted or concentrated depending on the dose required. The dose of D₂O will vary based upon the species and the sensitivity of the analytical method. For cats, the working solution was used to administer a dose of 0.7 g/kg D₂O. The stock solution described above minimizes the amount of sodium chloride solution introduced subcutaneously to the animal while still allowing accurate measurement of the dose. For small mammals such as bats, this concentration must be diluted to a working solution such as 0.1600 g/mL. This concentration allows the dose of 0.75 g/kg D₂O to be accurately measured and administered in approximately 100 µL or less sodium chloride solution.”

Line 197. Why are these particular concentrations chosen for the preparation of the standard curve? It is more usual to use logical intervals e.g., 0, 250, 500, 750 mg etc.

These standards were provided by Dr. Robert Backus. We have listed this in the acknowledgements and noted on line 209 that “The values above are suggested for a standard curve. Alternative values such as 250 ppm, 500 ppm, 750 ppm, and so forth can be used.”

Line 200 I question the value of the details of the FTIR spectrometry. These will be highly manufacturer specific. Problems are not addressed, for example procedures for filling the cell to ensure that no air bubbles are introduced.

We have added the steps to describe using methanol to first fill the cell to ensure that there are no air bubbles introduced. Additionally, we have revised the manuscript to state “Install a liquid transmission cell into the FTIR spectrometer and prepare the FTIR spectrometer software for analysis of D₂O in water. The parameter settings for the spectrometer software used in this protocol are listed in table 4. See the table of materials for specific software and FTIR spectrometer equipment.”

Lines 378-83. FTIR when used with ATR attachment rather than a transmission cell can be used for urine since the optical face is resistant to chemical attack. Newer model FTIR-ATR systems, e.g. the Agilent 4500 have much improved sensitivity.

We have revised the discussion to say “FTIR spectrometry can be used to measure deuterium enrichment in plasma and saliva, but it is not recommended to use an FTIR transmission cell to analyze deuterium enrichment in urine¹⁸. If urine is the desired sample type, then an attenuated total reflection (ATR) attachment should be used with the FTIR or IRMS should be used to assess deuterium enrichment for calculation of TBW.”

Line 370. What is appropriate, by what criteria?

In the discussion, we state “To avoid altering the total body water of small mammals, dilute the dose of deuterium oxide as minimally as possible, just enough to ensure the dose can be measured accurately.”

Lines 316-21. Pearsons correlation is inappropriate to use for method comparison - use concordance correlation.

Equally for method agreement, ANOVA is inappropriate, Bland and Altman's Limits of Agreement analysis should be used.

We used Deming regression and one-way ANOVA as these are typically used for comparing two different diagnostic methodologies in veterinary medicine. Deming regression is appropriate for when both data sets can contain errors (when both methods have some degree of imprecision). Bland-Altman plots are visual representations, and we did not believe were relevant to include as a representative result.

I understand why DXA was used as the comparator method but it is incorrect to say that it is a reference method. Indeed, D2O dilution is the acknowledged reference method for body composition to which DXA is compared. DXA is the reference for bone mineral but not soft tissue. I suggest rephrasing simply in terms of comparison rather than setting one up as a gold standard.

We have altered the language in the introduction and throughout the manuscript to reflect that DXA is a comparison method and not the gold standard.

Calculation of TBW. There appears to be no correction for deuterium exchange. Why not the usual 1.04 correction? It is also not clear whether the authors are advocating back-projection to time zero or end-point calculation. If the latter are calculations based on the last sample only (it seems so) or the average of two sample taken a short period apart (IAEA protocol). There is no indication that sample analyses should be replicated.

The authors are unfamiliar with a 1.04 correction. We have added a clarity note that deuterium exchange with labile hydrogen results in a 2% overestimation of total body water mass and this should be corrected for.

Ref: Backus et. al. 2000. Relationship between serum leptin immunoreactivity and body fat mass as estimated by use of a novel gas-phase Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy deuterium dilution method in cats.

Due to the limited amount of blood that can safely be collected and the high pack cell volume (PCV) of big brown bats, we were not able to run the analysis in triplicate as was done for the cats. We revised the protocol to highlight ideally samples and average of three samples is reported.

Line 256. 0.732 is only applicable in euhydrated individuals and may not be applicable across all species. This point should be made.

We have clarified this point and specified to use the value for healthy, euhydrated, non-lactating bats. We also provide a reference showing the change in fractional moisture content based upon lactation. Furthermore, we clarify for other species that published values should be used or values determined prior to performing calculations.

Line 252. It is not lean mass that is calculated but fat-free mass, i.e., everything but fat, which is why fat can be estimated by difference with body weight. This is important since FFM includes bone mineral not just conventional lean.

We have replaced lean body mass with fat-free mass to provide clarity to the readers.

There are no details of quality assurance and control procedures that should be adopted.

We have revised where relevant to include details of quality assurance and control procedures including that a sample of known concentration should be included in the analysis, triplicate analysis should be done on each sample, etc.

Minor Concerns:

Line 97 through not thru

Changed as the review suggested.

line 137 define IACUC here on first use not later at line 145.

Changed as the review suggested.

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