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Melatonin may help in weight loss

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GRANADA, Spain, April 30 (UPI) -- Melatonin, a natural hormone produced by the body and involved with the sleep cycle, may also help in controlling weight gain, researchers in Spain say.

The researchers from the University of Granada, the University Hospital San Cecilio in Granada, the University of Salamanca, the University of Jordan and the Service of Endocrinology of the Hospital Carlos III in Madrid found melatonin was found to be beneficial for young rats that had not developed metabolic or heart disease.

The study, published in the Journal of Pineal Research, found melatonin in the rats improved blood lipid profile, reduces triglycerides, increases high-density lipoprotein -- the "good" cholesterol -- and reduces low-density lipoprotein -- the "bad" cholesterol -- even without reducing food intake.

Researchers say melatonin might help in preventing heart diseases associated with obesity and dyslipidemia -- an abnormal amount of lipids in the blood.

If this finding is confirmed in humans, administration of melatonin and intake of food containing melatonin -- mustard, Goji berries, almonds, sunflower seeds, cardamom, fennel, coriander and cherries -- might be a useful tool to fight obesity and the risks associated with it, the researchers say.

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