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Melatonin Might Help Control Weight Gain and Prevent Heart Disease Associated With Obesity

ScienceDaily (Apr. 28, 2011) — University of Granada researchers have shown that melatonin -- a natural hormone produced by the body -- helps in controlling weight gain, even without reducing the intake of food. Melatonin also improves blood lipid profile, as it reduces triglycerids, and also increases HDL cholesterol and reduces LDL cholesterol.

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Melatonin is found in small quantities in some fruits and vegetables as mustard, Goji berries, almonds, sunflower seeds, cardamom, fennel, coriander and cherries. Thus, the intake of this kind of food might help in controlling weight gain and preventing heart diseases associated to obesity and dyslipidemia.

Trials with rats

University of Granada researchers have analyzed in young Zucker diabetic obese rats the effects of melatonin on obesity, dyslipidemia and high blood pressure associated with obesity. Melatonin was found to be beneficial for young rats that had not still developed any metabolic or heart disease. Researchers think that melatonin might help prevent

heart disease associated with obesity and dyslipidemia.

Finally, authors state that if this finding is confirmed in humans, administration of melatonin and intake of food containing melatonin might be a useful tool to fight obesity and the risks associated with it.

A collaborative study

This study was partially funded and supported by the Research Plan of the University of Granada, by the research group CTS-109 (Junta de Andalucía), Spain and the Erasmus Mundus programme (European Council). University of Granada researchers (from the Institute for Neuroscience of the Department of Pharmacology of the Faculty of Medicine), conducted this research in collaboration with the Clinical Trial Service of the University Hospital San Cecilio, Granada, the department of Physiology and Pharmacology of the University of Salamanca, the department of Pharmacology of the University of Jordan and the Service of Endocrinology of the Hospital Carlos III, Madrid.

The authors of this study are professors Ahmad Agil, Miguel Navarro, Rosario Ruiz, Sausan Abuamada, Yehia El-Mir and Gumersindo Fernández.

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Journal Reference:

- Ahmad Agil, Miguel Navarro-Alarcón, Rosario Ruiz, Sawsan Abuhamadah, Mohamad-Yehia El-Mir, Gumersindo Fernández Vázquez. **Beneficial effects of melatonin on obesity and lipid profile in young Zucker diabetic fatty rats.** *Journal of Pineal Research*, 2010; DOI: 10.1111/j.1600-079X.2010.00830.x

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