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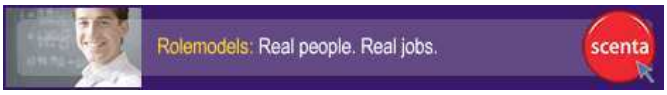

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Goat’s milk more beneficial than cow’s milk

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Spanish researchers have found that goat's milk contains more beneficial properties than cow's milk, which could aid the bloodstream and bone strength.

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Research carried out at the Department of Physiology of the University of Granada (UGR) in Spain revealed that some of the properties contained in goat's milk helps against ferropenic anaemia (iron deficiency) and bone demineralisation (softening of the bones).

This project, led by Dr Javier Díaz Castro, compares the nutritional properties of goat milk and cow milk, both with normal calcium content and calcium enriched, against the bioavailability of iron, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium.

To carry out this study, the metabolic balance technique has been used both in rats with experimentally induced nutritional ferropenic anaemia and in a control group of rats.

In order to know how the nutritive utilisation of these minerals may affect their metabolic distribution and destination, the UGR researchers have determined the concentration of these minerals in the different organs involved in their homeostatic regulation and different haematological parameters in relation to the metabolism of the minerals.

Results obtained in the study reveal that ferropenic anaemia and bone demineralisation caused by this pathology have a better recovery with goat milk.

Advantages of goat's milk

Due to the higher bioavailability of iron, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium, the restoration of altered haematological parameters and better levels of parathyroid hormone (PTH) - a hormone that regulates the calcium balance in the organism - were found in the rats that consumed this food.

Javier Díaz Castro points out that the inclusion of goat milk with normal or double calcium content in the diet "favours digestive and metabolic utilisation of iron, calcium and phosphorus and their deposit in target organs - parts of the organism to which these minerals are preferably sent - involved in their homeostatic regulation".

According to Castro, all these conclusions reveal that regular consumption of goat milk – a natural food with highly beneficial nutritional characteristics - has positive effects on mineral metabolism, recovery from ferropenic anaemia and bone mineralisation in rats.

"Additionally, unlike observations in cow milk, its calcium enrichment does not interfere in the bioavailability of the minerals studied," he added.

Castro concluded: "Studies in humans are still required in order to confirm the findings obtained in rats and to promote goat's milk consumption both in the general population and in the population affected by nutritional ferropenic anaemia and pathologies related to bone demineralisation."

Part of the results of this research has been published in the journals International Dairy Journal and Journal Dairy Science.

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