

Editorial

Milk: Bioactive Components and Role in Human Nutrition

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1. Introduction

In the current Special Issue, numerous and different aspects related to milk, an important component of a well-balanced diet, are presented.

Several of the scientists that contributed to this Special Issue investigated and tested the effectiveness of actions targeting the promotion of milk, and an increase in general daily milk consumption, especially for children: an important goal to achieve [1–4]. Gennaro et al. [3] provide an updated picture of communication strategies developed to improve healthy dietary habits in schoolchildren, with a focus on the importance of milk consumption. An example of this strategy is given by Emerson et al. [1]: small prizes increased plain milk and vegetable selection by elementary schoolchildren without adversely affecting total milk purchase. Two [2,4] of these studies are addressed towards consumer reactions relating to interventions promoting use of 1% low-fat milk.

It is worth mentioning the work of Lucarini [5] on the bioactive peptides of milk, from encrypted sequences to healthy applications; the author underlines how the exploitation of chemistry, bioavailability and the biochemical properties of bioactive peptides represent a key tool for nutraceutical and functional foods, also in the areas of circular bioeconomy and biorefinery [5]. In this context, the review by Vincenzetti et al. [6] focuses on the role of proteins and some bioactive peptides on nutritional quality, as well as the potential beneficial properties of donkey milk.

The microbiological, nutritional and sensory profile of raw and heat-treated milk are described in the work of Melini et al. [7], in order to evaluate the real risks and benefits of its consumption. Then, Gambelli [8] provides an updated picture of methodologies for the assessment of lactose. Some studies on the potential benefits of some milk components [9,10], as well as a consideration from a nutritional point of view of organic vs. conventional milk with regard to fat-soluble vitamins and iodine content [11], are also discussed.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the authors of the publications in this Special Issue. Their contributions will help to improve the understanding and promotion the key role of milk in nutrition.

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