

Special Issue

Autoimmune Diseases: The Protective Effect of the Gluten-Free Diet

Message from the Guest Editor

Cereals are an important food in human nutrition, but wheat- and gluten-containing cereals are toxic for some consumers. The term gluten refers to a protein complex typical of some cereals which provides viscosity, elasticity, and cohesion to flour-based doughs. There are two wheat proteins that are part of gluten: prolamin, called gliadin, and glutenin. Autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system produces antibodies that wrongly attack the body's own cells. There are many different autoimmune diseases, and one of the most common, coeliac disease, involves gluten.

A gluten-free diet (GFD) is the foundation of the safe and effective treatment of celiac disease; in fact, a good GFD compliance improves the symptoms and quality of life of these subjects. Some evidence indicates that gluten is related to the increased incidence of pathologies other than celiac disease, the genesis of which is still not fully understood. From the available data, it cannot be excluded that these diseases may also have an autoimmune origin.

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Nutrients is an on-line open access journal that was first published in 2009. *Nutrients* adheres to rigorous peer-review and editorial processes and publishes only high quality manuscripts that address important issues related to the impacts of nutrients on human health. The Impact Factor of *Nutrients* has risen rapidly since its establishment and it is now ranked in the first quartile of journals publishing in the field of nutrition and dietetics research.

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