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Effect of milk and dairy product consumption on acne risk and severity in young adult patients with acne vulgaris attending the dermatology clinics at King Fahd Hospital of the university, Alkhobar, KSA

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Introduction: Acne vulgaris is a common cutaneous disorder. Its prevalence is up to 80% in the majority of countries worldwide. There are multiple factors that play a role in acne vulgaris which include genetic, hormonal and stress. Many studies were done questioning the relationship between acne and diet especially dairy products. Some have shown controversial results. In Saudi Arabia, a study on the influence of milk and milk products on the severity of acne in young people was never done.

Objective: To assess the relation between dairy products consumption and acne risk and severity in young adults patients with acne attending the dermatology clinics at King Fahd Hospital of the University in Alkhobar, Saudi Arabia.

Method: This is a case control study using interview questionnaire conducted at the dermatology clinics at King Fahd Hospital of the University in Alkhobar, Saudi Arabia for a period of March 2015-April 2016. After acquiring the Institutional Review Board approval (N2015004) the study was initiated. Participants were interviewed with specific questionnaires related to specific dairy food consumption during the past 6 months. The acne severity was assessed by a dermatologist on duty using the Global acne grading system. The raw data was processed and entered for data analysis using SPSS program version 16.

Results: A total of 100 (27male, 73 female) participants. Their ages varied between 13 to 25 years. As compared to other studies done in other countries worldwide, there was no statistically significant difference ($P < 0.05$) found between the severity of acne with all the dietary factors except for consumption of milk ($P = 0.033$).

Discussion and conclusion: This study suggests that dairy products consumption does not influence or aggravate acne development in our young adults who were Saudis except for milk. We recommend conducting a randomized controlled trial to establish if there is a causal relationship between frequent milk consumption and acne severity and to assess the role of medical nutrition therapy in acne management. At this time, the best approach is to address each acne patient individually and carefully consider the possibility of dietary counseling.

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