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## Current beliefs and evaluation towards lactic products among university students from Hordaland (Norway) and Catalonia (Spain)

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**Background:** Lactic products are a great source of calcium. Failure to meet calcium consumption requirements is associated to health problems later in life. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a person's intention to behave is conditioned by the subjective norms associated to a concrete behavior and the attitudes towards it. The latter are conditioned by the person's beliefs and evaluation of the behavior. Herein, we aim to specifically assess how socio- demographic and dairy-consumption-related variables affect beliefs and evaluation towards dairy products of university students from two European regions with different dairy consumption rates.

**Methodology:** Validated online cross- sectional questionnaires were targeted to 18-30 years old university students from Catalonia (Spain) and Hordaland (Norway). Data were analyzed using a linear mixed model.

**Results:** In Norway, positive beliefs and evaluation of dairy consumption were 28% better in the 25 to 30 years group (95% CI: 12.6; 43.7) and 12.9% better for women (95% CI: 22.0; 37.0). In Catalonia, beliefs and evaluation of dairy were 13.8% better in students enrolled in 'Health Sciences and Bioscience' studies (95% CI: 6.8; 20.8) and 14.6% in students conducting a Master's program (95% CI: 0.5; 28.7). Overall, Catalan students had 23.1% better performance in the questionnaire.

**Conclusions:** In Norway, only socio-demographic variables (i.e. sex and age) were associated to correct beliefs and evaluation of dairy suggesting that historical tradition and social acceptance of dairy consumption may function as positive indirect inputs for building students' beliefs. In Catalonia, field and level of studies were the main influential elements, suggesting the existence of effective nutritional programs within the education system. Despite beliefs, evaluation made by Catalan students were generally more favorable to dairy, this was mainly true for health-related students. Hence, Catalan students from non-health study fields would benefit from including such programs in curriculum.

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