

[†]Department of Pediatrics, Columbia University Irving Medical Center, New York, NY

[#]Laboratory of Human Genetics of Infectious Diseases, Necker Branch, INSERM U1163, Necker Hospital for Sick Children, Paris, France

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The authors report competing interests.

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Plant-based Milks: A Possible Therapeutic Tool if Correctly Labeled and Prescribed

To the Editor: The NASPGHAN position paper on Plant-based Milks is opportune in reminding that appropriate infant formulas should be used as alternatives to human milk in the first year of life (1). According to the DRACMA metanalysis, soy, or hydrolysate rice formulae ensure nutritional adequacy since the second semester of life.

In all cow's milk allergy guidelines, cow's milk protein-based extensively hydrolyzed formulae are considered the first choice for the large part of CMA conditions.

Extensively hydrolyzed formulae are tolerated by at least 90% (with 95% confidence) of cow's milk allergy infants: hence, they may determine allergic reactions in up to 10% of cases. Such reactions to hydrolysate rice formulae are exceptional. As allergen avoidance is the first objective of every allergy care, hydrolysate rice formulae are an opportunity for cow's milk allergy in countries where they are available (2).

We agree that a clear distinction from the labeling point of view should be made between plant-based beverages and plant-based milks. The latter could be considered new-generation nutritionally fortified plant-based nutraceals with potential environmental, health, and ethical benefits (3).

The potential nutritional deficits (lysine, threonine, tryptophan, carnitine and taurine, iron, and zinc in partially hydrolyzed rice proteins formulas) are in fact balanced by industrial fortification and hormonal concerns (isoflavones present in soy protein) are not supported by evidence (4,5).

Therefore, free of any conflict of interest, it is advisable not to demonize the potential use of plant-based milks in patients really suffering from cow's milk allergy, but to regulate the production, labelling, and the correct prescriptive indication of these products, which can prove to be a therapeutic resource.

Maurizio Mennini, Veronica Calandrelli, Vincenzo Fierro, Lamia Dahdah, and Alessandro Fiocchi
Division of Allergy, Academic Department of Pediatrics, Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital, Rome, Italy

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Response to letter from Mannini et al

To the Editor: We thank Dr. Mennini and colleagues for acknowledging the NASPGHAN position paper on plant-based milks and pointing out the important contributions and guidelines of the DRACMA process regarding improving the worldwide management of cow milk allergy. In the Position Paper, we acknowledged the role of extensive hydrolysate formulas, including rice protein hydrolysate formulas, in the management of cow milk allergy. As pointed out in the 2016 article about updating DRACMA, the availability of extensive hydrolysates varies in different countries. For example, extensively hydrolyzed rice protein infant formulas are not commercially marketed in North America.