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Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition: Volume 29(4) October 1999p 503

EFFECTS OF LONG-TERM CONSUMPTION OF A WEANING FOOD SUPPLEMENTED WITH OLIGOFRACTOSE, A PREBIOTIC, ON GENERAL INFANT HEALTH STATUS**[Abstracts: Annual Meeting of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition; Denver, October 21-24, 1999]**

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Abstract 58

We conducted a double-blinded randomized controlled study to examine the effects of a pediatric weaning food supplemented with oligofractose (OF) on growth and health status in the pediatric population. Non breast-feeding infants attending daycare centers in Baltimore, MD and aged 4 months to 24 months were recruited and randomized to one of two groups; both received a standard infant cereal (Gerber, U.S.A.) for 6 months, with one group being supplemented with oligofractose (0.55 gram per 15 grams of cereal). Outcomes of this part of the study were general health status markers such as growth, frequency of reported febrile events, cold symptoms ("runny nose", "cough"), use of antibiotics and daycare absenteeism. The data was collected on a weekly basis by phone interview with the caregiver as well as by daycare observations. Standardized weight and length were obtained monthly. Subjects who consumed for less than 2 weeks were excluded from final statistical analysis. **Results:** 123 infants were enrolled and completed the study: 63 supplemented (S), 60 unsupplemented (US). Mean age at enrollment was 11.2±5.1 mo. and 12.3±5.6 mo. respectively. Average daily cereal intake was 32.6 gm in the supplemented group (representing 1.19 gm of OF) and 35.9 gm in the unsupplemented group. The children were followed for a total of 12,244 subject-days, 33.5 subject-years. No significant differences between the groups were noted with regards to age, gender, or length of study. **Conclusions:** Consumption of oligofractose-supplemented cereal resulted in adequate growth and was associated with reduction in febrile events, antibiotic use and day care absenteeism. Further studies are needed on the mechanisms by which prebiotics may yield these clinical benefits.

	Supplemented	Un-Supplemented	p
Fever + any cold symptoms*	11.4	17.16	0.001
"Runny nose"*	38.9	42.0	0.025
Antibiotic use*	8.24	12.18	0.001
Daycare absenteeism**	0.31	0.79	0.033
Wt/age - start*** (±SD)	0.32±1.48	0.04±1.14	
Wt/age - end*** (±SD)	0.40±1.43	0.07±1.08	
Ht/age - start*** (±SD)	-0.31±1.25	-0.13±1.13	
Ht/age - end*** (±SD)	-0.19±1.24	-0.04±1.00	

*Frequency reported per subject-year; **Mean days missed per subject/week; ***Z scores by NCHS tables

TABLE. No caption available.

Section Description

POSTER THEME SYMPOSIA

Nutrition