

THE PROBLEM OF LACTOSE INTOLERANCE IN CHILDREN FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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The problem of lactase deficiency and lactose intolerance (as a clinical manifestation of lactase deficiency) was described as early as 400 years BC. by Hippocrates. Lactase deficiency is associated with a decrease in the activity of the lactase enzyme, which breaks down the milk sugar lactose. The problem of lactose intolerance is especially relevant for children of the first years of life, since at this age dairy products make up a large part of the child's diet.

In order to analyze the problem of the incidence of lactose intolerance in children from Republic of Moldova, the parents of in kindergarten children were surveyed with a special questionnaire. The results of the survey revealed that the percentage of children with lactase deficiency is 11 % and 12.7 % do not know if they are sick. At the same time, of the 11 % of respondents who have children with lactase deficiency, 2.4 % of them did not pass the lactose intolerance test. 10 % of respondents do not know what lactose intolerance is, and 72 % believe that lactase deficiency and lactose intolerance are the same thing.

Keeping lactose intolerance under control takes place by eliminating lactose-containing products from the diet. However, at the same time, the use of lactose as an additive in non-dairy products is becoming increasingly common in the food industry. One of the main solutions to avoid lactose in food would be to inform consumers. The results of the survey highlighted the fact that they are insufficiently informed about the hidden lactose in food products. When asked which foods might contain lactose, respondents mostly chose foods that clearly contain lactose. Nevertheless, such products as sausage, powdered spices, instant soups, etc. were chosen by only 30% of the respondents.

The problem of determining the presence of lactose in food products is a priority one. In this study 12 sausages types from eight local manufacturers were chosen in order to confirm or infirm the presence of lactose in them. Only in the case two of the chosen samples lactose was indicated on the label, while in the remaining ten, according to the label, the manufacturer did not use it. However, as a result of laboratory experiments, lactose was detected in nine of the samples.

Keywords: children, hidden lactose, lactase deficiency, lactose intolerance

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