

Flavanol-containing diets and the renin-angiotensin system in hypertensive rats

While it is clear that consuming diets rich in fruits and vegetables has beneficial effects on cardiovascular health, the reasons for such benefits are not completely understood. Several specific compounds in fruits and vegetables have been identified as potential contributors to the observed effects. Flavanols are a group of these plant-made compounds that have received considerable attention over the past decade. Dr. Fraga's research group is investigating whether flavanols exert their favorable effects on blood pressure by working in ways similar to drugs used to treat hypertension. Their objective is to identify the specific biochemical ways by which the flavanol, epicatechin exerts effects on blood pressure in rats and cell cultures. The goal is to provide relevant information regarding the ways by which flavanol-containing foods benefit cardiovascular health.