

A Comparison of Similar Units of Dairy and Dairy Alternatives Products Available in Trinidad

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Background: Diets based on nutrient content profiles such as, calories from fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugars and sodium, directly influence the development of Heart Disease, Diabetes Mellitus, and Cancer, the top three leading causes of death in Trinidad and Tobago. Dairy product are known to be a rich source of these nutrient, as such, manufacturers have sought to manufacture products with more “healthful” nutrient options from regular and alternative sources.

Objective : Based on nutrient profiles of food nutrition fact labels, are alternative dairy products providing more “healthful” options than regular dairy products?

Design: One-way ANOVA contrast of the nutrient profiles was carried out on similar units of regular and alternative milks; the Null Hypothesis was rejected at 5%. Additionally, mean nutrient content test were carried out between and among the regular and alternative milks, by base, type and composition.

Results. The nutrient content differences observed between regular and alternative liquid milk bases were significant for most of the nutrients ($p < 0.05$), except for, saturated fat, sodium, calcium total carbohydrate and vitamin A content. For the powdered regular and alternative milk bases significance was shown for the nutrients; calories from fat, total fat, sodium, protein and calcium content.

Conclusion. Liquid alternative milks reflect the more healthful options having lower caloric, cholesterol and sugar content, and higher dietary fiber content, normally associated with reduced risk of heart disease and developing diabetes. Due to the many controversial claims on health implications of protein, vitamin C, vitamin D, calcium and iron, no conclusions can be made on whether the nutrient profiles of alternative milks reflect a more “healthful” option.