



Food Toxicology

Editorial

Food toxicology is the study of the nature, properties, effects and detection of toxic substances in food and their disease manifestation in humans. Food and Chemical Toxicology (FCT), an internationally renowned journal, that publishes original research articles and reviews on toxic effects, in animals and humans, of natural or synthetic chemicals occurring in the human environment with particular emphasis on food, drugs, and chemicals, including agricultural and industrial safety, and consumer product safety. herefore, the practice of food toxicology involves detecting toxic substances in food, characterizing their properties, studying their fate in the body (absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion), and investigating their adverse health effects. Toxic substances can be naturally present in food, formed when the food is cooked, added directly to food, or they can find their way into food from the immediate environment, such as packaging. Among various subdisciplines of toxicology, food toxicology has received wider public attention in recent years. This has been driven by an increased awareness of the health effects of foods, foodborne illness, as well as the rapid availability of information to consumers, thanks to the world-wide-web. Typically, a food contains hundreds of substances. Apart from the most obvious constituents, a majority of the substances in various foods have not been fully characterized. The assumption that food is safe to consume is based on the history of its consumption. In recent years, there has been increasing interest on the part of consumers regarding the “health-promoting” properties of various naturally occurring constituents of food, such as phytosterols from vegetable oils and isoflavones from soy. The addition of substances to foods that do not contain them naturally has raised questions about how they should be regulated. Food is a very complex mixture of nutrient and non-nutrient substances, whether it is consumed uncooked (e.g., raw

agricultural product) or in a cooked and highly processed ready-to-eat. Many of the non-nutrient substances are necessary for the growth and survival of the plant, and for the plant’s adaptation to the environment. Some of these substances may act as antinutrients rather than frank toxins, such as trypsin and chymotrypsin inhibitors, phytates that bind minerals, anti-thiamines in fish and plants, etc.

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