

# Bookworm

## Functional Food and Health

edited by Takayuki Shibamoto, Kazuki Kanazawa, Fereidoon Shahidi, and Chi-Tang Ho  
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reviewed by Antonio Monge

This book is a product of presentations made at the first symposium on Functional Foods, held 10–14 September 2006 at the American Chemical Society's national meeting in San Francisco, California, USA. The book establishes a relationship between functional food and health, viewing it as an important opportunity for good health and nutrition for the populations of the 21st century.

The chapters dedicated to bioavailability, metabolism, and toxicity provide important information regarding the usefulness of functional foods. Throughout the book, different authors present the science behind the beneficial effects that these products are reputed to have. This is an important, but not always easy, issue to resolve.

The book provides examples that relate results observed in traditional medicine with those obtained from validated scientific experimentation. These types

Photo by Wilfredo Rodriguez.



*Early findings show that juice from the Noni fruit may be helpful for treating high-blood pressure, according to the authors.*

of studies are especially important in today's society, in which demand is strong for clinical studies that evaluate the true effectiveness of functional foods.

The book offers case studies of a good number of functional foods and the beneficial effects that they have on health. Such is the case, for example, of *Morinda citrifolia L.* (Noni) and its effects on high blood pressure (chapter 39). With regard to the different parts of the noni tree, traditional medicine has reported very effective uses, from anti-inflammation to cancer and from treatment of diabetes to high blood pressure. These uses do not always have a scientific base that would permit establishing a relationship between the plant and its effects. In this chapter, the authors discuss the effects of the Polonesian noni fruit juice for treating high blood pressure, demonstrating its initial usefulness. Such findings as this suggest the importance of carrying out clinical trials to determine the safety and effectiveness of functional foods.

The book is easy to read and provides up-to-date information for those interested in functional foods and for those who work with medicinal agents. Functional foods can provide us with interesting approaches in the discovery of new medicinal agents.

It is hoped that in successive works, the authors will deal with other important issues involving functional foods, including economics, their importance to developing countries, and the ethics of harvesting.

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*The Hungarian adaption of Nomenclature of Inorganic Chemistry (IUPAC Recommendations 2005), produced by Akadémiai Kiadó, is now available.*