Porcine Research

Why not pork?

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Abstract. This short note aims to show the benefits of pork consumption, by presenting scientifically proven nutritional facts about this choice of meat.
Key Words: lean food, nutrition, saturated fats.

There is currently, in the marginal scientific literature, but especially in the mass media, an intense propaganda against meat consumption and especially against pork. I could say that it is an insufficiently scientifically grounded propaganda. These ideas are constantly fueled by some proponents of plant-based medicine, proponents who have beliefs based on empirical observations and not on statistical data. The long-lived populations of the planet include both meat consumers (e.g., Tibetans) (Wiener 2013) and populations with Mediterranean culinary habits (Vesa et al 2008). Studies show that man, in his history as a species, has taken a huge step in evolution with the transition from vegetarian to omnivorous (Walker 1981). Southeastern Europe, especially Romania, has long traditions related to pork dishes (Păsărin 2005), pork being the main meat or fat, especially in the cold season, or exhausting agricultural work.

There are also some nutritionists who have read the credible scientific literature. This is the case of Mrs. Mihaela Bilic (see her interview with the newspaper Adevărul from 2015, entitled "Dr. Mihaela Bilic, nutritionist: No argument against pork"). The nutritionist Mihaela Bilic says that, for humans, pork is preferable to beef even at a very young age. She disagrees with physicians who claim that the diversification of the child's meat diet should be limited to turkey and beef. She asks these questions: "Why not the pig? What's wrong with pork?". There is no argument against pork, she says. On the contrary, it considers that pork fat is less saturated (only 38%) and healthier than beef fat (45% saturated) (Smil 2013).

The nutritionist also says that the pig is not a ruminant animal, but a monogastric one, being 94% compatible with humans in terms of amino acid composition (www.adevarul.ro; see similar data on mtDNA in the work of Abdoli et al 2018, Figure 1). How a child digests pork will not digest beef. It is important, she says, to choose a lean piece of pork.

For example, pork muscle is leaner than any piece of beef and is also leaner than chicken leg. If the pig is of rustic breeds (Botha et al 2014), fed properly, raised in well-being conditions, pork meat and fat have valuable properties and significant amounts of omega 3 fatty acids (Botha et al 2016; 2020), says the nutritionist for www.adevarul.ro (2015). The fact that some pigs are not or were not raised in natural or semi-natural conditions, but chemically and hormonally forced, does not mean that pork would have an intrinsic lack of health for the consumer (Criste et al 2017).

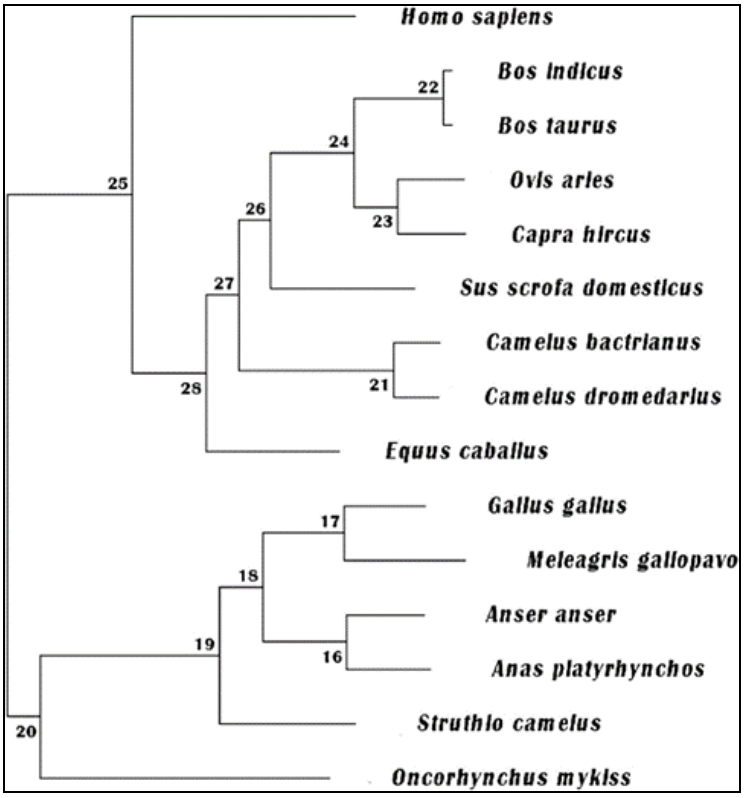

Figure 1. Molecular phylogenetic tree of the mtDNA of *Homo sapiens* and reported nucleotide sequences for the studied species by maximum likelihood method. Numbers at the nodes represent the percent bootstrap values for interior branches after 1000 replications (Abdoli et al 2018). The lower the phylogenetic kinship between two organisms, the higher the probability that the ingested proteins will be considered non-self (allergens), and the more different the amino acid spectrum in the composition of the meat.

An additional argument supporting the consumption of pigs without ridiculous worries is demonstrated by the compatibility for transplantation of transgenic pig-human organisms, the low frequency of allergic reactions and the fact that the pig is an excellent human model for research (metabolism, physiology, toxicology) (Deglaire & Moughan 2012; Petrescu-Mag et al 2020).

Conflict of Interest. The author declares no conflict of interest.

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