

# Clinical relevance and potential of functional foods to improve human health

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Functional foods are similar in appearance to or may be conventional foods, are consumed as part of a usual diet, and have been demonstrated to possess physiological benefits and/or reduce the risk of chronic diseases beyond basic nutritional function. The clinical relevance and potential of these foods becomes apparent when comparing the magnitude of effects with that of standard drugs used to treat common conditions like arterial hypertension. Despite in parts strong evidence for physiological and health benefits, functional foods are not widely used by clinicians. This presentation will discuss the example of cardiovascular benefits of flavanol-rich foods and how functional foods could be part of clinical practice.