



Finding Common Ground
An Oldways Scientific & Media Consensus Conference

The Evidence that the Mediterranean Diet is the Gold Standard

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**The recorded history
of the traditional Mediterranean diet
as a health promoting diet
started with the work of Ancel Keys and his colleagues
in the legendary seven countries study**

Mediterranean diet is the dietary pattern found in the olive growing areas of the Mediterranean region in the late 50' and early 60'



Life expectancy / Disease Rates in U.S., Greece and Japan, in 1960's

		U.S.	Greece	Japan
Life expectancy at age 45 in years	(M)	27	31	27
	(F)	33	34	32
Coronary Heart Disease	(M)	189	33	34
	(F)	54	14	21
Cerebrovascular Diseases	(M)	30	26	102
	(F)	24	23	57
Breast Cancer	(F)	22	8	4
Stomach Cancer	(M)	6	10	48
	(F)	3	6	26
Colon, Rectal Cancer	(M)	11	3	5
	(F)	10	3	5
Total Cancer	(M)	102	83	98
	(F)	87	61	77

Source: W. Willett, Science 1994



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**The Mediterranean Diet and Food
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SCIENTIFIC
& MEDICAL



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Mediterranean diet, traditional risk factors, and the rate of cardiovascular complications after myocardial infarction: final report of the Lyon Diet Heart Study

An alpha-linolenic acid-rich Mediterranean diet seems to be more efficient than presently used diets in the secondary prevention of coronary events and death.

The protective effect of the Mediterranean dietary pattern was maintained up to 4 years after the first infarction, confirming previous intermediate analyses.

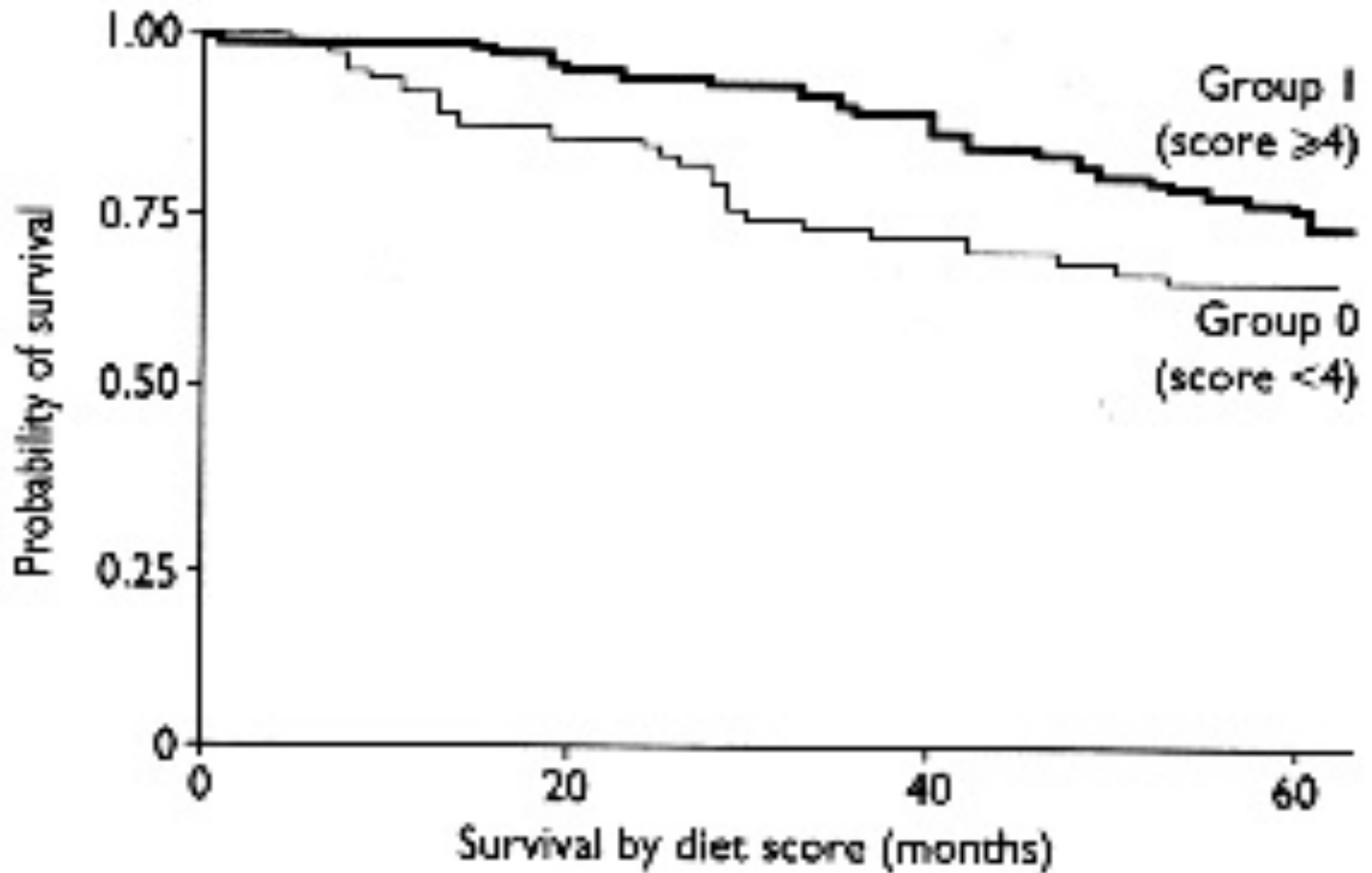
De Longeril M. Lancet 1994
de Lorgeril M. Circulation . 1999



The MD can be thought of as having 9 components:

- high olive oil consumption
- high consumption of legumes
- high consumption of cereals , mostly unrefined
- high consumption of fruits
- high consumption of vegetables
- moderate consumption of dairy products, mostly as cheese and yogurt
- moderate to high consumption of fish
- low consumption of meat and meat products
- moderate wine consumption, if it is accepted by religion and social norms

Diet and overall survival in elderly people



A one unit increase in diet score, devised a priori on the basis of characteristic component of the traditional common diet in the Mediterranean region was associated

with 17% reduction in overall mortality

(95% CI 1% to 31%)

A randomized controlled trial of a moderate-fat, low-energy diet compared with a low fat, low-energy diet for weight loss in overweight adults

**A moderate-fat, Mediterranean-style diet,
controlled in energy**

offers an alternative to a low-fat diet

with

**superior long-term participation and adherence, with
consequent improvements in weight loss**

McManus et al. IJO, 2001

EPIC GREECE



per 2-unit increase in Mediterranean diet score

A higher degree of adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with a significant reduction in :

total mortality

adjusted mortality ratio 0.75

coronary heart disease

adjusted mortality ratio 0.67

cancer

adjusted mortality ratio 0.76

**Rather than single foods or nutrients,
a global health dietary pattern could
exert protective effect**

**The combination of different types of
food with healthy characteristics
might be necessary to express their
protective potential**



Relation of the traditional Mediterranean diet to cerebrovascular disease in a Mediterranean population

Increased adherence to the Mediterranean diet,
2-point increments in score

inversely associated with CBVD incidence

(adjusted hazard ratio = 0.85, 95% CI: 0.74, 0.96)

and mortality (adjusted hazard ratio = 0.88, 95% CI: 0.73, 1.06).

These inverse trends were mostly evident among women and
with respect to Ischemic rather than hemorrhagic CBVD

Modified Mediterranean diet and survival: EPIC-Elderly cohort

per 2-unit increase in Mediterranean diet score

A higher degree of adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with

8% reduction in overall mortality:

But the reduction was considerably higher in Mediterranean countries like Spain and Greece

**2671 EPIC participants
from nine countries
60 years or older**

**had prevalent myocardial infarction but no stroke
or cancer at enrollment**

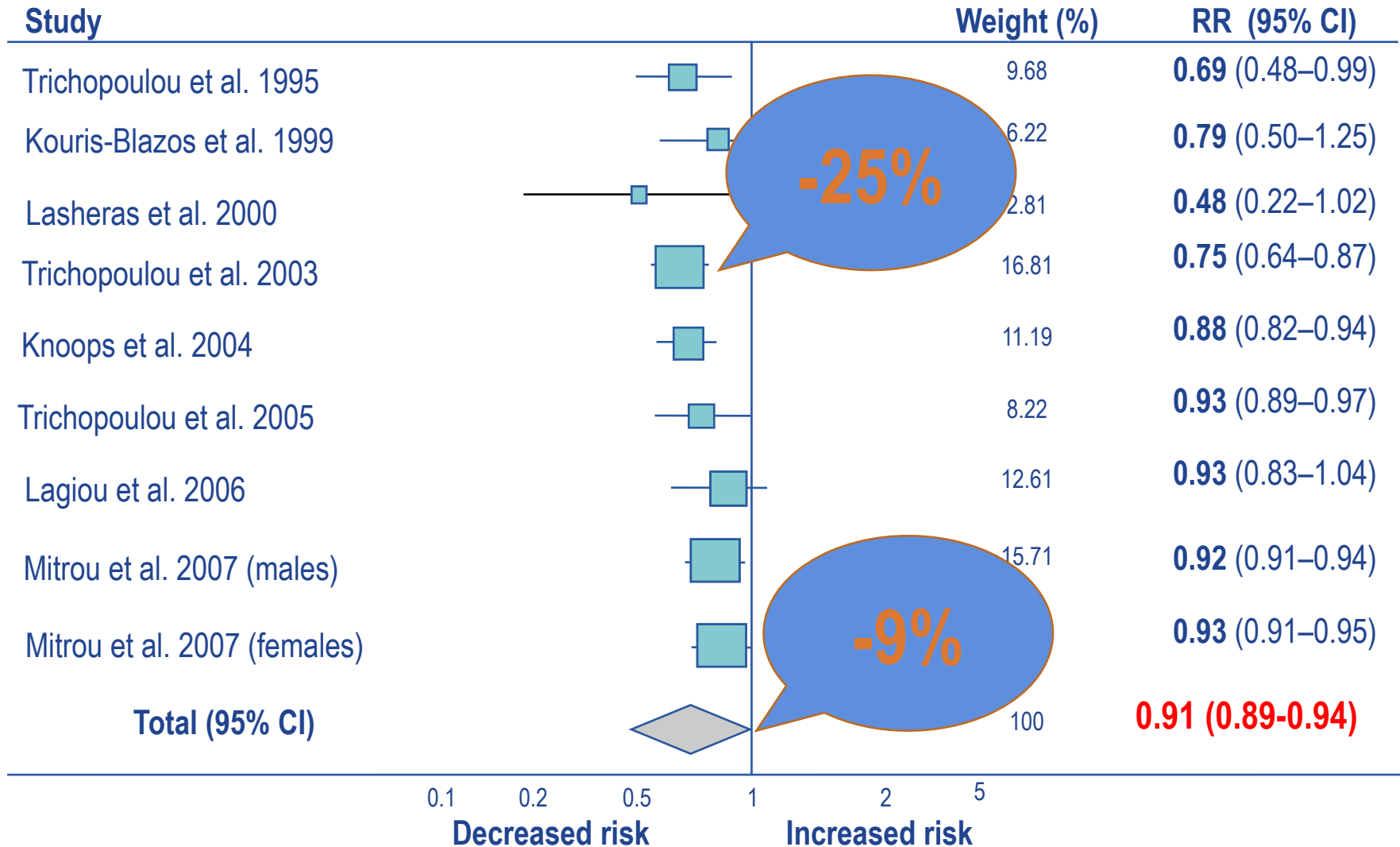
Modified Mediterranean diet and survival after myocardial infarction: The EPIC-Elderly study

**Increased adherence to modified Mediterranean
diet by two units**

was associated with

18% lower overall mortality rate

Adherence to MD & overall mortality



WHAT WAS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC

Several prospective cohort studies have indicated that conformity to the traditional Mediterranean diet is associated with longevity

No study has investigated the relative importance of individual components of the Mediterranean diet score in the generation of this association

Anatomy of health effects of Mediterranean diet: Greek EPIC prospective cohort study.

The contributions of the individual components of the Med diet
to this association were :

- 23.5% moderate ethanol consumption,
- 16.6% low consumption of meat and meat products
- 16.2% high vegetable consumption
- 11.2% high fruit and nut consumption
- 10.6% high monounsaturated to saturated lipid ratio
- 9.7% high legume consumption

The contributions of high cereal consumption and low dairy consumption and fish intake were minimal,

**The whole argument concerning
wine drinking**

is

**how best to balance
the risks and the benefits**

Mediterranean diet and telomere length in Nurses' Health Study: population based cohort study

**In this large study, greater adherence to the Mediterranean diet
was associated with longer telomeres.**

**These results further support
the benefits of adherence to the Mediterranean diet
for promoting health and longevity**

**The traditional Mediterranean diet is associated
with longer survival**

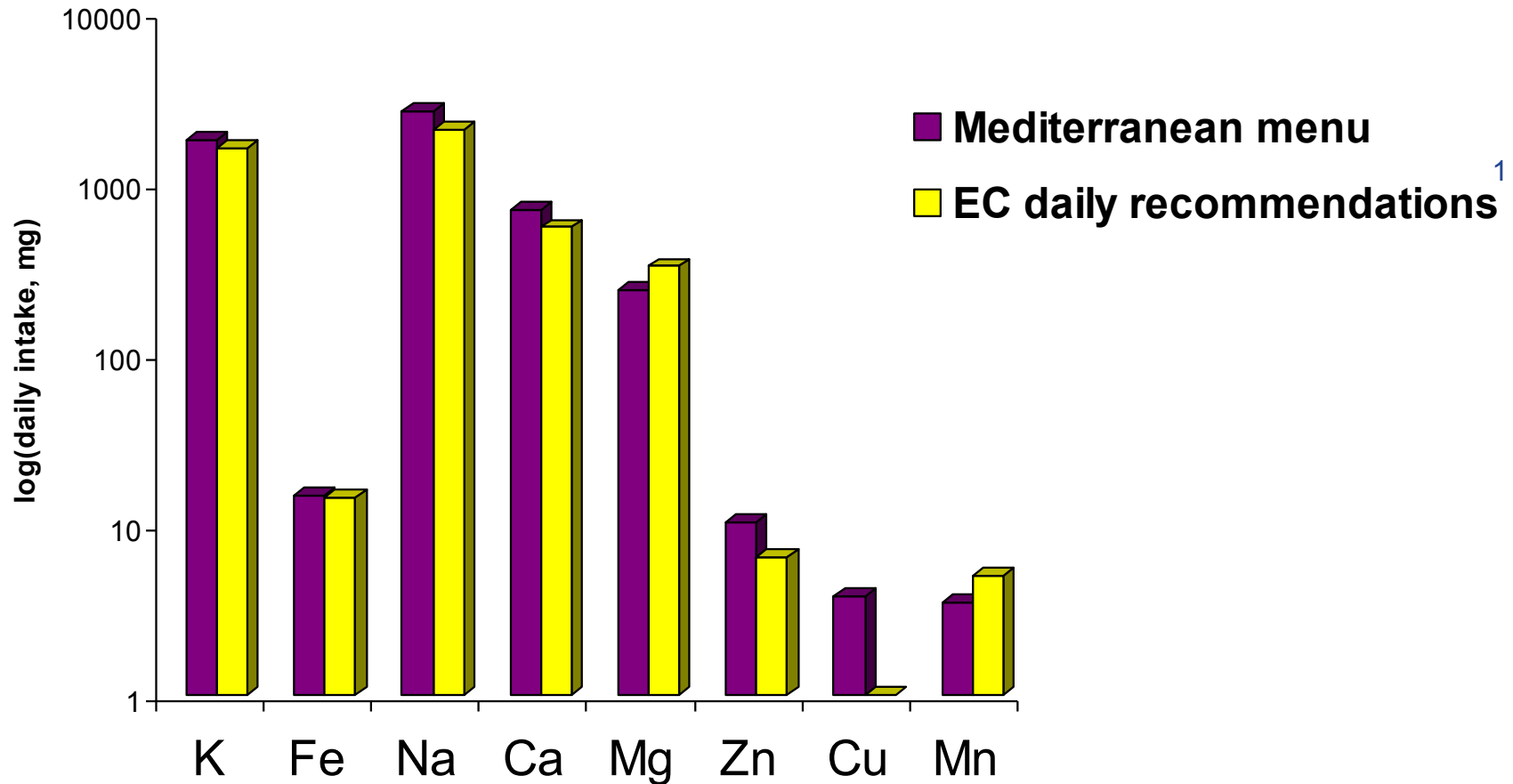
**This could be partly attributed to
Mediterranean traditional foods
on which this diet largely relies**

Thank you for your attention



Clay statuette of a woman teaching her daughter how to cook.
Boston Museum of Fine Arts 5th century BC.

Inorganic constituents



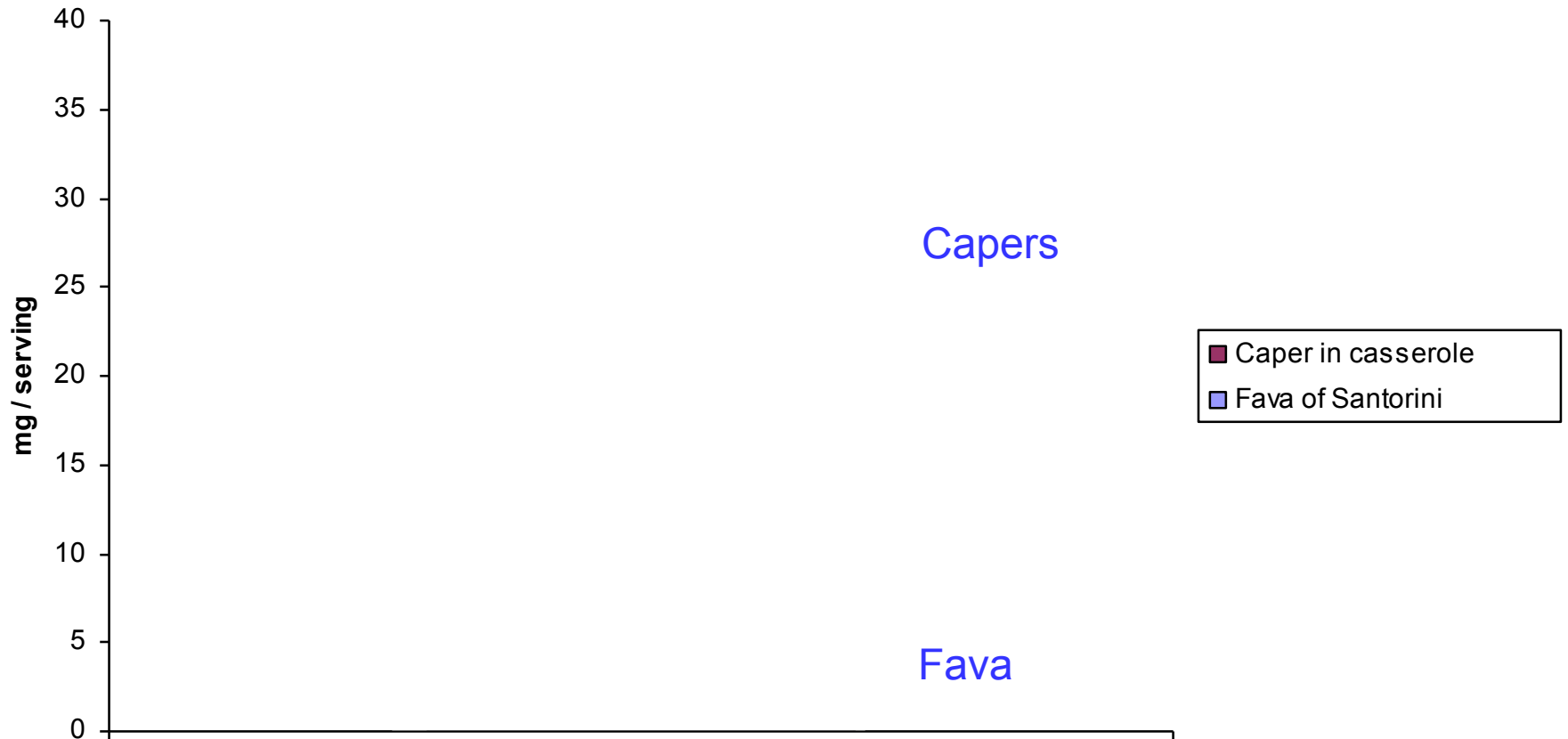
1. Commission of the European Communities. Food-Science Techniques: Reports of the Scientific Committee for Food (Thirty-first series), Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1993, pp 1-248

**Investigation of the potential of 194 traditional Greek foods
to bear nutrition claims**

**Comparison of energy content and nutritional composition to the
European specifications
on a wide range of nutritional components**

**Overall, about 1024 nutrition claims were relevant for the 194
traditional foods studied**

**The flavonol, flavone and flavan-3-ol content of a typical traditional serving of fava
complemented with "caper in casserole" sauce**



“Countries, communities and cultures that maintain their own traditional food systems

are better able

to conserve local food specialities with a corresponding diversity of crop varieties and animal breeds.

They are also more likely to show a lower prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases.

The Mediterranean diet offers a clear example”

Thank you for your attention



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