

GMO – PROJECT GRACE – PLATFORM FOR THE PHD PROGRAM

Mária BARTUŠOVÁ

Faculty of Public Health, Slovak Medical University in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia

Keywords: PhD program, research project, research skills, GMO, genetically modified maize.

During the PhD program, students must complete coursework, pass comprehensive exams, write and defend a dissertation which summarizes their findings. During the PhD study for student it is very helpful and has a valuable contribution to the quality of the thesis his/her participation in research projects. My PhD study was a part of the project GRACE - GMO Risk Assessment and Communication of Evidence funded by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme.

GMO (Genetically modified organisms) has become the common term, because they are part of the human food and environment. For this reason they have been subjects of hot debates in recent decades. The demographic studies indicate that global population is increasing very quickly, revealing a threat to the supplies of basic human needs. The GMO appear to be very helpful in solving the problem of food supply for population in the future. In this situation, the application of GMO needs to be carefully assessed using all information from appropriate toxicological studies. Therefore, one of the key objectives of the study was to evaluate the effects of GM MON810 corn in two concentrations (11% and 33%) on health status, animal weight, food consumption, hematological, biochemical and histopathological indicators in male and female Wistar Han RCC® rats.

An assessment has been made by conducting of two 90-day subchronic toxicology feeding trials A and B (with two different GM maize MON810 varieties) performed by taking into account the guidelines published by the EFSA Scientific Committee and the OECD Test Guideline 408.

Our studies carried out within the project GRACE showed that the MON810 corn at a level of up to 33 % in the feed did not cause adverse effects in Wistar Han RCC® rats in both sexes after subchronic exposure.

Being a member of research project during PhD program is associated with advantages in professional development, contributions to knowledge, problem-solving skills, participations on abroad mobilities and trainings, teamwork experiences and networking opportunities. Research projects often bring people together, providing occasions to network and open the door to new collaborations in the future. It is an opportunity for students to further develop their research skills and gain more experience in the field of research and science.

Received: July 04, 2023