

Biofortifying rice with folate could prevent birth defects

Bolstering rice with a gene to produce more folate, or vitamin B9, could ward off birth defects, according to a new study.

An estimated 50 to 70 percent of all neural tube defects occur due to maternal folate deficiency, according to the Belgian research team.

The researchers suggest their folate biofortified rice (FBR) would be consumed in regions that lack the vitamin such as Balrampur, India and Shanxi, China.

In a paper on the product, the research team used the standard metric of the World Health Organisation called the Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY).

According to them, the DALY reflects the sum of Years of Life Lost (YLL), a measure of premature mortality, in addition to the Years Lost due to Disability (YLD), which accounts for both morbidity and mortality for those with health problems.

By the team's count, folate biofortification could eliminate between 29 and 111 DALYs per year in Balrampur per 1,000 births and between 47 and 104 DALYs in Shanxi.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: Genetically modified rice could help eliminate birth defects, says study