



## NOBEL SECRETS

Last year, Franz Messerli, the Swiss-born director of hypertension program at St Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital and Columbia University in New York, published a slightly tongue-in-cheek paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, linking chocolate consumption with winning Nobel prizes.

Messerli found a correlation between a country's level of chocolate consumption and the number of Nobel laureates per capita. Switzerland came out on top – both in number of laureates and chocolate consumption – closely followed by Sweden and Denmark.

"Since chocolate consumption has been documented to improve cognitive function, it seems most likely that in a dose-dependent way, chocolate intake provides the abundant fertile ground needed for the sprouting of Nobel laureates," Messerli said in the paper.

He also noted that the link did not prove causation between the two.

And now a team of British researchers has reported that drinking milk is related to winning Nobel prizes. The scientists, from Gloucester Royal Hospital in the UK, analysed milk consumption data from 22 countries and discovered that Sweden had the highest rate of milk and dairy product consumption per capita (340 kg per year) and also the highest rate of Nobel Prize winners (33 per 10 million population).

Switzerland, which followed closely behind with an average dairy consumption of 300 kg, has produced 32 laureates (per 10 million). China, with no Nobel winners, had the lowest dairy consumption with just 25kg per person.

Results of the Nobel milk study were published in a letter in the January 2013 issue of *Practical Neurology*.

The researchers noted (as Messerli did) that although they found an association between dairy and Nobel laureates, this did not prove a cause and effect relationship.

The authors said that the higher levels of dairy consumption could be a reflection of a strong educational system but also suggested that the flavonoid content in chocolate might increase brain function.

"So to improve your chances of winning Nobel Prizes you should not only eat more chocolate but perhaps drink milk, too: or strive for synergy with hot chocolate," the authors concluded. 🍫

