Ricardo Almon went to the Johann-Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and obtained the medical degree in 1993. In 1996 he obtained the doctor degree in medicine by the Faculty of Medicine in Frankfurt am Main. He specialized in Family Medicine in 2005 in Sweden. He was registered as PhD student in 2004 at Örebro University. During the past years he has combined his PhD studies with clinical work as family doctor.

Lactase persistence is a very recent trait in hominid evolution. It is the prime example for gene-culture co-evolution. Lactase is the enzyme necessary for the digestion of lactose. Since 2002 we are able to genotype for the mutation (LCT-13910 C>T) which enables lifelong consumption of fresh milk without symptoms of lactose intolerance. A Swedish population of children were genotyped for the LCT-13910 C>T mutation showing a 5.5 times higher prevalence for lactase non-persistence compared to the historical figures (14% vs 2.5%). In the same population the interrelationships between genetics, milk intake in impact on body shape were studied. Evidence for higher measures of body fat coupled to consumption of milk and milk products or the lactase genotype was not detected. Nevertheless, a positive association between milk intake as well as lactase persistence and body height was found.

Using the tenets of Mendelian randomization it was studied if the status of lactase persistence or non-persistence affects the development of the metabolic syndrome in adults in a population from the Canary Islands in Spain. A positive association of lactase persistence with the metabolic syndrome was found. Lactase persistent subjects of the Canary Islands exhibited a 57% higher risk to develop metabolic syndrome compared to lactase nonpersistent subjects. In conclusion, the long-term effects of childhood milk consumption keep to be elucidated. Non-caloric milk constituents might influence the somatotropic axis of children, which can have both positive and negative long-term effects. The status of lactase persistence and milk consumption may increase the susceptibility to develop metabolic syndrome in some populations.