

COMPARISON OF THE IMPACT OF MEAT AND VEGETARIAN DIETS ON THE OCCURRENCE OF COLORECTAL CANCER

PORÓWNANIE WPŁYWU DIETY MIĘSNEJ I WEGETARIAŃSKIEJ NA WYSTĘPOWANIE RAKA JELITA GRUBEGO

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Authors' contribution

Wkład autorów:

A. Study design/planning
zaplanowanie badań

B. Data collection/entry
zebranie danych

C. Data analysis/statistics
dane – analiza i statystyki

D. Data interpretation
interpretacja danych

E. Preparation of manuscript
przygotowanie artykułu

F. Literature analysis/search
wyszukiwanie i analiza literatury

G. Funds collection
zebranie funduszy

Dear Editor,

We have recently read an interesting article by Yad Di et al. [1] describing the impact of a meat-based diet on gastrointestinal cancers. We were particularly intrigued by its implications for colorectal cancer. Meat-based diets continue to be one of the most commonly adopted eating patterns. In our opinion, this article addresses an important issue, and the analysis of the relationship between colorectal cancer and meat consumption may promote a shift towards a vegetarian diet. As known, colorectal cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers, and a modifiable factor influencing its occurrence is diet.

In this scientific study [1], 40 cohorts covering a total of 3,780,590 individuals were selected. Analyses indicated that higher consumption of red meat was associated with an increased risk of both colon and rectal cancer. This association has also been investigated by other researchers. A study conducted by Bernstein et al. demonstrated a strong correlation between the amount and frequency of meat consumption and colorectal cancer [2,3]. Additionally, studies have noted that increased consumption of grilled, stewed, or processed red meat also raises the risk of colorectal cancer [4].

Given the rising consumption of red and processed meat, we believe it is essential to educate about the potential health consequences. Instead of consuming meat, incorporating plant-based products into the diet is advisable. A study conducted by Orlich et al. [5] is particularly relevant to the topic of a vegetarian diet. From 2002 to 2007, they observed 96,354 patients categorized into groups based on their diet, including non-vegetarians, vegans, lacto-ovo vegetarians (who also consume eggs, milk, dairy products, honey), pescovegetarians (including fish

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and seafood consumption), and flexitarians (severely restricted consumption of red meat but not entirely eliminated). The patients were followed for an average of 7.3 years, during which 380 cases of colon cancer and 110 cases of rectal cancer were recorded. Significantly lower incidences of colorectal cancer were observed among patients following a vegetarian diet compared to those consuming meat. Lower incidence was also observed among patients following various forms of a vegetarian diet [5]. The study estimated that a vegetarian dietary pattern could reduce the incidence of colorectal cancer by up to 20%. Additionally, it is worth noting that a vegetarian diet reduces the occurrence of obesity and arterial hypertension, which could be an additional benefit.

We believe that these studies are crucial, emphasizing the connection between diet and a serious illness such as colorectal cancer. This may contribute to popularizing the vegetarian diet and, consequently, reducing the incidence of this disease, as well as many others. We still observe a lack of knowledge on this topic throughout society, and therefore, we decided to address it to increase awareness.

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