Health effects of olive oil and the Mediterranean diet

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Effect size

There was insufficient evidence to support the use of the Mediterranean Diet for the prevention of rheumatoid arthritis, but it may provide some benefit for the progression of rheumatoid arthritis.


What is the effect?

There is a promise for the Mediterranean diet in reducing the progression of rheumatoid arthritis, but no evidence for a role in reducing its risk.

The evidence for both outcomes is limited and more studies are required. Well-designed prospective studies are needed to determine the protective role of a Mediterranean diet in preventing rheumatoid arthritis.

What is the quality of the evidence?

The risk of developing or progression of rheumatoid arthritis:

Prospective study / clinical trials A systematic review

2 clinical trials

2 prospective studies

WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

What to keep in mind?

- Only a small number of studies met the inclusion criteria (4 studies out of 12 full-text articles assessed).
- Both the prospective studies were conducted among Americans, whose general dietary habits differ substantially from a traditional Mediterranean diet, and individuals with the highest adherence score may still not resemble the traditional Mediterranean diet.
- All studies had a moderate to high risk of bias.

Key results

Risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis:

No significant association with the Mediterranean diet (2 of 2 studies found no association).

Progression of rheumatoid arthritis:

Significant improvements in clinical parameters including pain, physical functioning, swelling, inflammatory markers and/or morning stiffness was reported from a Mediterranean diet intervention in 2 of 2 clinical trials over 3 to 6 months.

Limitations

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Other reviews