Any high diet quality, including a Mediterranean diet specifically, was associated with a reduction in the incidence of depressive symptoms, but a causal relationship is not yet established.

What is the effect?

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE EVIDENCE?

Any dietary pattern or food group
Systematic literature and meta-analysis

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND?

• There was considerable heterogeneity found.
• The evidence was from observational studies only, precluding causal relationships.
• Potential confounders were not always taken into account.
• Most studies measured dietary habits in a single assessment, while multiple assessments are more accurate over the long-term.
• Studies used different outcome definitions for depression (e.g. a structured interview vs. antidepressant use).
• An association between diet and depression was no longer found when the analyses controlled for baseline subclinical depressive symptoms. This may indicate the association is due to reverse causation (i.e. persons with less depression are more likely to follow a healthy diet) but, on the other hand, correcting for baseline depressive symptoms could also be an overcorrection, since it may result in cancelling out the effects that the persons diet had in the years before the study started.


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