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THE NORDIC DIET AND COGNITION – THE DR's EXTRA STUDY

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Objectives

The Nordic dietary pattern has beneficial effects on cardiovascular risk factors but effect on cognition has not been studied. We studied association of the Nordic diet with cognition during four years.

Methods

A population-based random sample of 1140 men and women, 57-78 years old participants of the DR's EXTRA Study, was studied at baseline and after four years. The Nordic diet score was created based on a four-day food record. Based on the Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer's Disease (CERAD) neuropsychological test battery the CERAD total score (CERAD-TS) was calculated.

Results

The baseline Nordic diet score was associated with improvement in four-year CERAD-TS after adjustment for age, gender and baseline CERAD-TS [β 0.14 (95% CI 0.04-0.23, $p=0.006$)]. Further adjustment for intervention group, education, smoking, symptoms of depression, cardiorespiratory fitness and prevalent medications weakened this association [β 0.10 (95% CI -0.00-0.20), $p=0.054$]. These associations were similar after excluding individuals with impaired cognition at baseline. Individuals with good adherence to the Nordic diet at baseline had higher four-year CERAD-TS than those with poor adherence [84.2 (83.3-85.1) vs. 83.5 (82.6-84.3) points, $p=0.037$] after adjustments.

Conclusions

The Nordic diet is suitable to maintain good cognition among elderly men and women. Further studies are needed to confirm this finding.