

Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet Related to the Health Related and Well-Being Outcomes of European Mature Adults and Elderly, with an Additional Reference to Croatia

Pridržavanje mediteranske prehrane vezane za ishode zdravlja i dobrobit odraslih starijih osoba u Europi, s dodatnim osvrtom na Hrvatsku

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Introduction & Objective: Expectations of living longer, healthier lives are rising along with life expectancy. It is established that the importance of eating particular foods has a significant impact on quality of life. The Mediterranean diet (MD) is one of the healthiest eating habits and is reliably linked to a number of positive health outcomes [1]. The purpose of this study was to evaluate MD adherence in the over-50 population in Europe, with a focus on Croatia. It also sought to identify regional variations and explore associations with health-related indicators, such as disease incidence, body mass index (BMI), grip strength measurement, control, autonomy, and self-realization scale (CASP-12), and disease incidence.

Methods: For the population over 50, data from the SHARE project [2, 3] were used in this study. Logistic regression was used to link adherence to the Mediterranean diet with health markers after the frequency of each respondent was examined.

Results: According to the study's findings, following the MD pattern is positively correlated with self-perception of health, which followers of the pattern are more likely to rate as "very good" or "excellent" (37.05%), which is significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from people who do not follow the patterns of MD (21.55%). The regression models show that there have been notable changes in the maximal grip strength measure among MD adherents as well ($OR_{\text{MEDIUM}} = 1.449$; $OR_{\text{HIGH}} = 1.293$). Data for EU nations are also broken down into regions (Central and Eastern; Northern, Southern, and Western Europe), which includes Croatia. Croatian participants (39.6% twice a week) showed the biggest differences in meat, fish, and egg consumption trends compared to participants from the other four European regions. Data for Croatia differs from the average for Europe in terms of the percentage of overweight and obese people throughout all recorded age categories, with the 50–64 age group having the highest percentage (normal BMI: just 30.3%).

Conclusion: This study added to the body of literature that is currently available and covered 27 nations in Europe, putting the results in a broader geographic context. The Mediterranean diet has once more shown to be a significant influence in relation to behavior towards one's health. The results that have been given are crucial for public health services since they point to potential crucial elements in maintaining the population's health after the age of 50.

LITERATURE

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