Can the MIND Diet Affect Psychosocial Outcomes of Middle-Aged Latinos?

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Introduction

Today, middle-aged Latino adults make up 8% of the nation’s population; that’s over 2.4 million people. (Administration for Community Living, 2015)

This population, however, tends to show higher rates of psychological distress, such as high levels of depressive status, stress, loneliness, and low levels of quality of life which can be attributed to factors such as health behaviors and low socioeconomic status. (Torres, L., Driscoll, M. W., & Voell, M. (2012))

Studies have shown that people that adhere to healthy behaviors such as diets like the Mediterranean diet, have better psychosocial outcomes. (parletta, N., Milte C. M., Meyer, B. J. (2013)).

Methods

The Mediterranean Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay, or MIND Diet consists of consuming 10 brain health food groups, which include: green leafy vegetables, all other vegetables, berries, nuts, olive oil, whole grains, fish, beans, poultry, and wine.

We assessed diet using the Block 2005 Food Frequency Questionnaire which included 114 items.

Frequency of consumption of each food item was assigned a score of 0, .5 or 1. Scores can range 0-15, with higher scores indicative of higher adherence to the MIND diet. MIND diet scores were dichotomized, so scores less than 8.5 were considered low adherers and scores greater than 8.5 were considered high adherers.

The NIH Toolbox was used to assess stress, depressive symptoms, general life satisfaction, and loneliness.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare stress, depressive symptoms, general life satisfaction, and loneliness between low and high adherers.

Results

61 total middle-aged Latinos, with a mean age of 58, 77% female, participated in a 12-month prospective study. 63% of the participants received no more than a high school education. The current study involves baseline data.

Higher scores indicate higher levels of general life satisfaction, depressive symptoms, loneliness, and stress.

The results indicate that high adherers self-reported significantly higher general life satisfaction and lower stress levels.

However, no significant differences were seen for depressive symptoms and loneliness.

Conclusions

Findings suggest that middle-aged Latinos adhering to the MIND diet exhibit lower levels of stress and higher general life satisfaction.

Future Implications

Future interventions must be created and tested to examine the impact of diets, such as the MIND diet with culturally-tailored components, on psychological distress among middle-aged Latinos.

In order to improve quality of life—such healthy diets could reduce the burden of chronic disease in this population.

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