THE NUTRITION & METABOLISM GROUP

Queen's University Belfast

Fruit

Psychological

Vegetables

Review

Is fruit and vegetable intake linked with how we feel?

What do we know already?

Increasing research supports the idea that what we eat can affect how we feel (i.e. our mental health). One food group that has received increasing attention among researchers with regards to mental health is fruit and vegetables. This is probably because of the strong evidence which shows their protective effect in relation to a number of chronic diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease), as well as the fact that they are a rich source of some of the nutrients which have been linked to mental health.

What did we do?

As no summary existed on the research surrounding the potential link between fruit and vegetables and mental health, we gathered the academic literature on the topic and reviewed it in order to get a better insight into the area.

Why is this important?

Research which looks at the link between food intake and mental health is important because poor mental health continues to rise in our society. For that reason, we need to come up with inexpensive and effective ways to reduce the number of people affected by poor mental health, and to reduce the negative impact of mental health problems.

What did we find out?

Although some study's findings supported a relationship between fruit and vegetable intake and mental health, overall, results across the literature are so far inconsistent. There are a number of possible reasons for this, including the differences in how the studies were carried out, and in how they measured people's mental health and fruit and vegetable intake. Our overall conclusion was that future well-designed studies were needed to investigate the relationship further. Our review of the literature has been published in an academic journal (Proceedings of the Nutrition Society).

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