

## Mediterranean Diet May Combat Depression

Previous studies have established the benefits of the Mediterranean Diet in reducing inflammatory, vascular, and metabolic processes. Almudena Sanchez-Villegas, from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain), and colleagues studied 10,094 initially healthy university graduates, collecting data regarding their dietary habits and following each participant for the onset of clinical depression. Diets were rated on adherence to the components of the Mediterranean diet, namely: high ratio of monounsaturated fatty acids (such as those found in olive oil) to saturated fatty acids (found in animal fats like butter and meat); moderate use of alcohol and dairy products; low consumption of meat, and high consumption of legumes, fruits, nuts, cereals, vegetables, and fish. The researchers found that those who most closely followed the Mediterranean diet were more than 30% less likely to develop depression than those who least adhered to the diet. Stating that: "Our results suggest a potential protective role of the [Mediterranean Diet] with regard to the prevention of depressive disorders," the team posits that because the foods characteristic of the Mediterranean Diet may help to improve blood vessel function, fight inflammation, reduce the risk of heart disease, and repair oxygen-related cell damage, those effects may affect the risk of developing depression.

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Almudena Sanchez-Villegas, Miguel Delgado-Rodriguez, Alvaro Alonso, Javier Schlatter, Francisca Lahortiga, Lluís Serra Majem, Miguel Angel Martinez-Gonzalez. "Association of the Mediterranean Dietary Pattern With the Incidence of Depression: The Seguimiento Universidad de Navarra/University of Navarra Follow-up (SUN) Cohort." *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2009;66(10):1090-1098.