

China study shows fibre for oesophageal cancer prevention

November 21 2013, by Anika Rodgers



The researchers advise that new dietary guidelines for China include a recommendation to increase fibre intake to prevent oesophageal cancer. Credit: Austronesian Expeditions

Populations in China's north-west have been the focus of research which investigated risk factors for oesophageal cancer.

The Western Australian and Chinese research team found high dietary fibre intake can help reduce the incidence of oesophageal cancer, which has a low survival rate.

Curtin University's School of Public Health and Shihezi University conducted the hospital based case-control study in remote north-west China (Xinjiang region), where the rates of oesophageal cancer are far

greater than anywhere else in the world.

Oesophageal cancer is the sixth leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide.

Co-author and Curtin University's Colin Binns says researchers are able to understand how different countries develop cancer by analysing [risk factors](#).

"We like to do studies on types of cancers and diseases [all over the world] which we believe it's possible to give people advice on prevention such as lifestyle factors," he says.

"What we do is look for areas in the world that have higher and lower rates of different cancers and diseases. By making these comparisons we can get clues to what the causes are."

The Chinese participants included 359 oesophageal cancer sufferers and 380 healthy controls. Participants were both male and female; and they came from the same area and were of similar age (average age 61 years).

"We asked very comprehensive questions about the types of foods people were eating five years before they developed the cancer," he says.

By using statistical tests the researchers were then able to determine that all fibre is important but specifically the fibre from fruits and vegetables.

"In this case we found there was a significant reduction in cancer risk in those that consumed more than 27g of fibre per day," he says.

Prof Binns says this type of cancer is malignant and can be difficult to treat.

"Oesophageal cancer is a particularly nasty one, and the five year survival is less than twenty per cent," he says.

"Anything that you can do to diminish someone getting oesophageal cancer is worthwhile."

With the information discovered the researchers advise that new dietary guidelines for China include a recommendation to increase fibre intake to prevent oesophageal [cancer](#).

"Well fortunately [oesophageal cancer](#) isn't as common in Western Australia as it is in China, but you can assume that the same principles apply," Prof Binns says.

Provided by Science Network WA

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