

# Lower education levels linked to unhealthy diets

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People with lower levels of education may eat larger amounts of unhealthy, calorically dense food than those with a higher education level, possibly because they are more physically active, according to new research published November 6th in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE*, by Jonas Finger and colleagues at the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin, Germany.

Studies consistently show that unhealthy diets are seen more often in people of lower socioeconomic status, a term based on factors such as [education level](#), income level, and occupation. Overall physical activity, however, may also be related to socioeconomic status and dietary habits.

In this study, the authors used a large-scale survey approach to investigate the relationship between education level, food consumption, and physical activity. They analyzed a large database from a representative German adult population and found that German adults with a low level of education consumed more sugar- and fat-rich foods than adults with a high education level. They also consumed fewer fruits and vegetables than those with higher education levels.

They next analyzed how [physically active](#) each group was, which is related to how much energy they used. They found that adults of lower socioeconomic status were more physically active and expended more energy than those of higher [socioeconomic status](#). These results suggest that the higher energy expenditure in this group may explain their higher consumption of sugar- and fat-rich foods.

**More information:** Finger JD, Tylleskär T, Lampert T, Mensink GBM (2013) Dietary Behaviour and Socioeconomic Position: The Role of Physical Activity Patterns. PLoS ONE 8(11): e78390. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0078390](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0078390)

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