

# Don't choose a diet based on what's trending

March 11 2014, by Lindsey Elliott

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A new study is causing a lot of confusion and showing that social media and science might not mix.

Research published in the journal *Cell Metabolism* has made a lot of headlines with findings that show adults age 50-65 who ate more [protein](#) were more likely to die from cancer. That headline quickly spread across [social media](#).

"I think the study is valuable because it does show we need to investigate this further," said Mark Haub, associate professor and head of the human nutrition department at Kansas State University. "The problem is when the headlines come across in social media, they allude to cause and effect, so if somebody is only looking at the headlines or the first paragraph, they may see that and think they need to avoid protein, when in fact due to the weaknesses of the study, that's not going to be the case for everybody."

Haub says what didn't make the headlines is that people age 65 and older with the same [dietary pattern](#) tended to have a decreased risk of mortality from cancer. Those are details you wouldn't find unless you looked past the 140-character headline.

"Social [media](#) is a great way to get information, but people need a filter and to be educated on what some of the problems may be when looking at health-related information and trying to make judgments or decisions about what might be best for them," Haub says.

That's why you should not choose a diet based on what's trending. Instead, get informed about the diet or lifestyle and consult your physician before making the change, Haub says.

**More information:** "Low Protein Intake Is Associated with a Major Reduction in IGF-1, Cancer, and Overall Mortality in the 65 and Younger but Not Older Population." Morgan E. Levine, Jorge A. Suarez, Sebastian Brandhorst, Priya Balasubramanian, Chia-Wei Cheng, Federica Madia, Luigi Fontana, Mario G. Mirisola, Jaime Guevara-Aguirre, Junxiang Wan, Giuseppe Passarino, Brian K. Kennedy, Min Wei, Pinchas Cohen, Eileen M. Crimmins, Valter D. Longo. *Cell Metabolism* - 4 March 2014 (Vol. 19, Issue 3, pp. 407-417)

Provided by Kansas State University

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