

# Fruit and vegetables best protection for pancreas

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(Medical Xpress)—A University of Auckland research team has found that people who eat both fruit and vegetables will have the best protection against common pancreatic diseases.

Tobacco use, obesity and heavy alcohol consumption were the biggest risk factors for the development of pancreatic diseases.

The research team led by Dr Max Petrov and Professor John Windsor from the Department of Surgery at the University of Auckland, carried out an extensive review and analysis of 51 prospective cohort studies in the general population that had included more than three million individuals and nearly 11,000 patients with pancreatic disorders.

They investigated 31 different factors - nine risk factors, four protective factors, and 18 factors that were neutral. Current tobacco use was the single most important risk factor for developing pancreatic diseases, increasing the risk of acquiring a [pancreatic disease](#) by 87% when compared with those who never smoked. This was followed by obesity and heavy use of alcohol.

Tobacco use and the heavy use of alcohol had bigger effects on the risk of acute pancreatitis and chronic pancreatitis than on [pancreatic cancer](#).

"The best quality data showed that vegetable consumption and fruit consumption provided the greatest protection against pancreatic diseases", says Dr Petrov. "Vegetable consumption had a stronger

association with protection against acute pancreatitis, and fruit [consumption](#) with protection against pancreatic cancer."

The 51 prospective cohort studies in the general population included in the review came from the United States, (17), Sweden (16), Japan (11) and two each from Austria, Denmark and Norway, and one from Singapore.

"Unfortunately, no quality population based study came from New Zealand, reflecting a lack of national linkage of health data," says Dr Petrov. "This is in stark contrast to thriving data linkage networks that our colleagues in Scandinavia and the United States have been enjoying for more than a decade."

" There is a strong need to invest in a health data linkage system in New Zealand, if risk and protective factors for diseases of the pancreas (and other organs) in New Zealanders are to be unveiled", says Dr Petrov.

In the United States alone, pancreatic diseases (most commonly acute pancreatitis, chronic pancreatitis, and pancreatic cancer) affect more than 330,000 people each year. The USA spends \$2.6 billion per year just on the inpatient costs for acute pancreatitis. Pancreatic cancer is predicted to become the leading cause of cancer deaths by 2050.

Provided by University of Auckland

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