

Mediterranean diet may help protect kidney health

October 30 2014

Adhering to a Mediterranean-style diet may significantly reduce the risk of developing chronic kidney disease, according to a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (CJASN)*.

Chronic [kidney disease](#) is a growing epidemic, and while there has been significant progress in protecting against kidney disease and its progression through [aggressive treatment](#) of risk factors such as hypertension and diabetes, many people still experience declining [kidney function](#) as they age. Minesh Khatri, MD (Columbia University Medical Center) and his colleagues wondered whether an improved diet might provide additional benefits.

"Many studies have found a favorable association between the Mediterranean diet and a variety of health outcomes, including those related to cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, and cancer, among others," said Dr. Khatri. "There is increasing evidence that poor diet is associated with kidney disease, but it is unknown whether the benefits of a Mediterranean diet could extend to kidney health as well." The Mediterranean diet includes higher consumption of fruits, vegetables, fish, legumes, and heart-healthy fats, while minimizing red meats, processed foods, and sweets.

The researchers examined the associations of varying degrees of the Mediterranean diet on long-term kidney function in an observational, community-based, prospective study. In their analysis of 900 participants

who were followed for nearly 7 years, every one-point higher in a Mediterranean diet score, indicating better adherence to the diet, was associated with a 17% lower likelihood of developing chronic kidney disease. Dietary patterns that closely resembled the Mediterranean diet (with a score of ≥ 5) were linked with a 50% lower risk of developing [chronic kidney disease](#) and a 42% lower risk of experiencing rapid kidney function decline.

In an accompanying editorial, Julie Lin, MD, MPH, FASN (Brigham and Women's Hospital) noted that a Mediterranean-style diet is only one component of an overall healthy lifestyle, which also needs to incorporate regular physical activity. "Although a seemingly simple goal, achieving this is challenging. We need to begin by embracing the reality that there is no magic pill or miracle food, only vigilance and discipline with [diet](#) and regular exercise, and the rare indulgence in cake for very special occasions," she wrote.

More information: The article, entitled "The Association between a Mediterranean-Style Diet and Kidney Function in the Northern Manhattan Study Cohort," will appear online at cjasn.asnjournals.org/ on October 30, 2014.

The editorial, entitled "Where What is Not Stated or Required May Be the Most Illuminating," will appear online at cjasn.asnjournals.org/ on October 30, 2014.

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

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