

Fruit and vegetables linked to changes in skin colour, new research finds

June 21 2018



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Skin colour in young Caucasian men is strongly linked to high levels of fruit and vegetable consumption, new research by Curtin University has found.

The research, published in the *Journal of Nutrition* and Intermediary Metabolism, suggests that [skin colour](#) can be a clear indicator of whether a person has a high intake of fruit and vegetables. This is due to the presence of coloured compounds called carotenoids, found in a wide range of fruit and vegetables.

Lead author Master of Dietetics student Ms Georgia Bixley, from the School of Public Health at Curtin University, said the research uncovered a new way to assess someone's consumption of fruit and vegetables.

"The aim of our study was to determine whether there was a connection between fruit and [vegetable consumption](#), carotenoid intake and yellow [skin](#) colour in young Caucasian men, as Australian men are typically known to consume less fruit and vegetables than women," Ms Bixley said.

"We were able to find this connection through a process called reflectance spectroscopy (RS), an emerging technique which measures the colour and intensity of reflected light on the skin pigments.

"Our research found that different body locations including the forehead, biceps, palm and soles of the feet on men with light coloured skin were the best predictors of fruit and vegetable intake."

The study assessed the skin colour of 30 Caucasian men, aged between 18 and 30 years old, living in Perth.

Co-author Dr. Karin Clark, also from Curtin's School of Public Health, explained further research was needed to examine the relationship, but the findings may be of interest to nutritionists and health professionals around Australia.

"Two thirds of Australians are currently overweight or obese, with only one in 20 people consuming the recommended daily serves of fruit and vegetables," Dr. Clark said.

"Our research could play a key role in identifying people who have a low consumption of fruit and vegetables, and better understand their higher risk of chronic diseases.

"By conducting further research into this connection, it could open up the possibility of being able to predict someone's [fruit](#) and [vegetable](#) intake from their skin [colour](#), rather than relying on them to remember every meal they eat."

More information: Georgia S. Bixley et al. Skin colour predicts fruit and vegetable intake in young Caucasian men: A cross-sectional study, *Journal of Nutrition & Intermediary Metabolism* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jnim.2018.06.001](#)

Provided by Curtin University

Citation: Fruit and vegetables linked to changes in skin colour, new research finds (2018, June 21) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-06-fruit-vegetables-linked-skin-colour.html>

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