

ADHD is related to high-sugar, unhealthy diets

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There is a link between ADHD and dietary habits. This is shown in a new study by Örebro researchers, published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*.

"We can see a link between ADHD and a higher intake of sugar and saturated fats, but lower intake of fruit and vegetables," says Lin Li, doctoral student at Örebro University. Co-author of the study is professor Henrik Larsson.

Almost 18,000 twins aged 20 to 47 were included in the study via the Swedish Twin Registry. They have filled out a questionnaire on lifestyle and health.

Researchers found that both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity are associated with dietary habits, these findings remained stable across age, sex and socioecological status. By using the unique and large adult twin sample, this study, for the first time, found that the two heritable traits might share some genes.

"We are exploring dietary habits and ADHD to obtain a better understanding of why there is an association. A better understanding may help us explain why individuals with ADHD are at increased risk for several somatic diseases, such as obesity. It may also generate new hypothesis for [genetic research](#) and treatment alternatives," says Henrik Larsson.

"The published study is the very first step to get a clear picture of how ADHD associates with [dietary habits](#), we are not able to say this is a [causal link](#), but the genetic connections of the two traits could provide evidence and support for future experimental and molecular researches," says Lin Li.

It is estimated that around 5% of children and 2.5% of the [adult population](#) may have ADHD, with around 70% of these caused by genetic factors. The mechanisms behind ADHD remain unclear, making it difficult to diagnose and treat.

Contributing to the study are researchers from Karolinska Institutet and Mälardalen University, as well as from Norway and the Netherlands.

More information: Lin Li et al. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms and dietary habits in adulthood: A large population-based twin study in Sweden, *American Journal of Medical Genetics Part B: Neuropsychiatric Genetics* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/ajmg.b.32825](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajmg.b.32825)

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