

People who eat more fish have fewer signs of vascular disease in the brain

November 4 2021



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Researchers in France have found a link between eating more fish and a lower risk of vascular brain disease. Vascular brain disease involves damage to blood vessels in the brain and is a risk factor for vascular

dementia and stroke. The research is published today in the journal *Neurology*.

Researchers from the University of Bordeaux, analyzed data from the Three City Study, a large study of the relationship between vascular diseases and dementia.

The researchers analyzed MRI scans from 1,623 people over the age of 65 with no medical history of stroke, cardiovascular disease or dementia. The participants also filled in a questionnaire about their [dietary habits](#).

The participants were split into four groups, according to how frequently they ate fish: less than once week, about once a week, two to three times a week, or four or more times a week. The researchers compared the number of signs of blood vessel disease between people in each group.

Participants who said that they ate more fish had fewer signs of damage in MRI scans of their brains than those who ate it less frequently.

The association between fish intake and blood vessel disease was stronger in people aged 65–69 compared to older people in the study, and there was no significant relationship between in people over 75 years old.

Dr. Rosa Sancho, head of research at Alzheimer's Research UK, said: "For most of us our risk of dementia depends on the complex interaction of multiple genetic and environmental factors. Understanding which aspects of our lifestyle have the greatest effect on our brain health is key to empowering people to make informed decisions about how they live their lives.

"Observational studies like this are not able to pinpoint cause and effect. While the researchers attempted to control for other factors that could

underlie differences in signs of vascular brain disease, it is difficult to definitively attribute these to the amount of fish in people's diets. As participants had a single brain scan and reported their dietary habits at one point in time, it's not clear how relevant the findings are to long-term brain health.

"The NHS recommends eating two portions of fish a week as part of a balanced diet. We know that oily fish can be a source of important fatty acids, but it is unlikely that any specific food or supplement holds the key to maintaining a healthy brain.

"Research suggests that what is good for your heart tends to be good for the brain and taking steps to control [blood pressure](#) and cholesterol, not smoking, only drinking within recommended limits and leading an [active lifestyle](#) have all been linked to better [brain](#) health as we age."

More information: Aline Thomas et al, Fish Intake and MRI Burden of Cerebrovascular Disease in Older Adults, *Neurology* (2021). [DOI: 10.1212/WNL.00000000000012916](#)

Provided by Alzheimer's Research UK

Citation: People who eat more fish have fewer signs of vascular disease in the brain (2021, November 4) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-11-people-fish-vascular-disease-brain.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.