

Low protein intake is associated with reduced muscle mass and strength in women over 65

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Different institutions, including the University of Valencia (UV), have studied the relationship between sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass in older people) and obesity derived from this condition with a lack of protein in

the diet of women over 65 years of age. 164 Valencian women participated in the study, published in the journal *Nutrición Hospitalaria*.

"The approach of [sarcopenia](#) has an enormous impact on the quality of life of the elderly, by allowing them to maintain their [daily activities](#) and independence for many more years and with an optimal state of health," says Julio Fernández Garrido, professor at the UV Department of Nursing.

The results of the study showed that of the women who participated, with a mean age of 72 years, 26.2 percent had an intake lower than that recommended by the WHO, 25.6 percent were in some stage of sarcopenia and 12 percent were affected by sarcopenic [obesity](#). On the other hand, 73.8 percent of the women had a higher protein consumption than the recommendations, which was related to a higher energy intake pattern. Sarcopenia also causes a loss of strength and function of the muscles, as well as weakness, tiredness, and problems with balance and mobility.

According to the team, this work shows the need to continue with the research and "establish recommendations for protein intake in accordance with the realities of the elderly and establish effective public health policies that highlight the special relevance of this macronutrient in the [aging process](#)."

The Chair of Healthy, Active and Participative Aging signed between the Valencia City Council and the UV has played a relevant role in the research, since it has allowed to lay the foundations on which to develop the study. The results of this research can also be implemented in municipal senior centers, where numerous activities of the Chair are carried out.

Methodology

Participants in the study had their diets monitored for three days in which their nutrient intake was evaluated. They also underwent a series of physical tests to measure strength, balance and speed, functions affected by sarcopenia. The results of those women who were diagnosed with sarcopenia and with obesity were then crossed to establish the percentage of [women](#) with sarcopenic obesity.

More information: José Miguel Soriano del Castillo et al, Protein intake in community-dwelling postmenopausal women and its relationship with sarcopenia, *Nutrición Hospitalaria* (2021). [DOI: 10.20960/nh.03690](#)

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