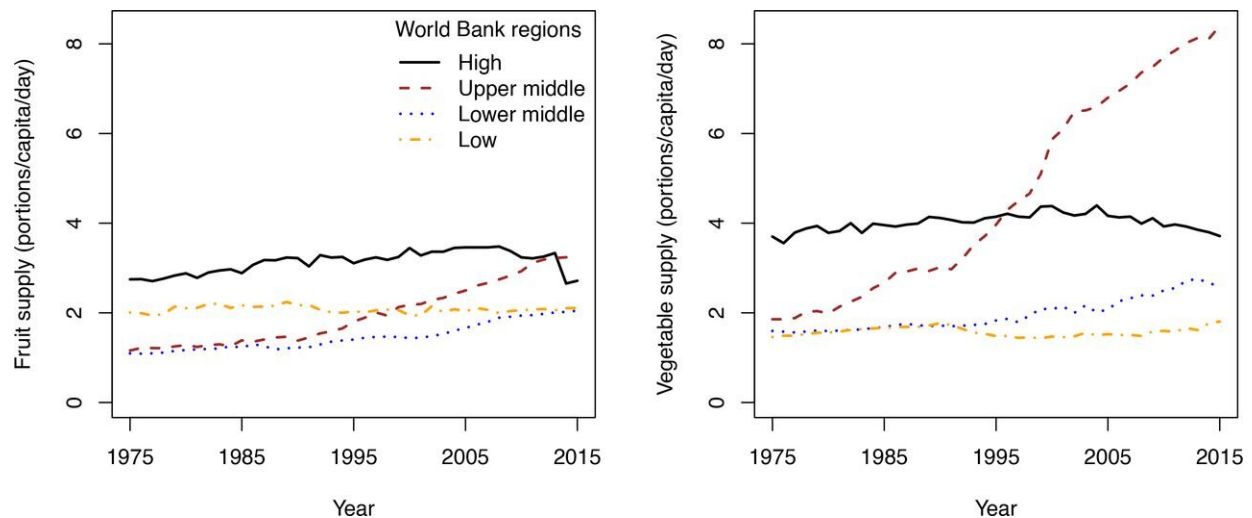


# Fruit and veg supply issues associated with raised blood pressure, study shows

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Trends in fruit supply and vegetable supply by World Bank region from 1975 to 2015. Credit: *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health* (2023). DOI: 10.1136/bmjnph-2022-000455

It is recognized that low fruit and vegetable consumption is a major, modifiable, risk factor associated with raised blood pressure. However, how the national supply of fruit and vegetables has impacted blood pressure trends is little-known.

To address this, Dr. James Bentham, Senior Lecturer in Statistics at the University of Kent, and his colleague Dr. Linda Oude Griep at the

University of Cambridge, analyzed supply trends from 1975 to 2015 and examined whether they met the WHO recommendations of 400g a day.

The researchers examined associations with systolic, diastolic, and raised [blood pressure](#), using data on [fruit](#) and vegetable supply and blood pressure across 159 countries. The results indicated that increased availability of fruit and vegetables resulted in lower levels of raised blood pressure, nationally.

Their findings also highlighted that many countries, nearly half of those studied within the research, do not have access to enough fruits and [vegetables](#), and this a particular problem in low-income countries.

"Lower income countries that have a reduced availability of fruit and veg, are therefore at risk of higher levels of raised blood pressure," Dr. Bentham said.

"In the UK we are currently experiencing fruit and vegetable rationing—and whilst this happens occasionally in this country, limited fruit and vegetable supply because of a lack of logistics is a permanent issue in a lot of parts of the world."

"Our results underpin the urgent need for national and international policies to expand fruit and vegetable productivity, in order to ensure sustainable fruit and vegetable supply, especially in low-income countries."

"This, combined with public health programs targeting fruit and [vegetable consumption](#) at the recommended level, are essential to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases at national and global levels."

Dr. Bentham's latest research into food supply limitations echoes results from an earlier study which [characterized changing food supplies](#)—with the aim of informing food policies that would ensure national food

security, support access to healthy diets and enhance environmental sustainability.

The current paper is published in *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health*.

**More information:** Linda M Oude Griep et al, Worldwide associations of fruit and vegetable supply with blood pressure from 1975 to 2015: an ecological study, *BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjnph-2022-000455](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjnph-2022-000455)

Provided by University of Kent

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