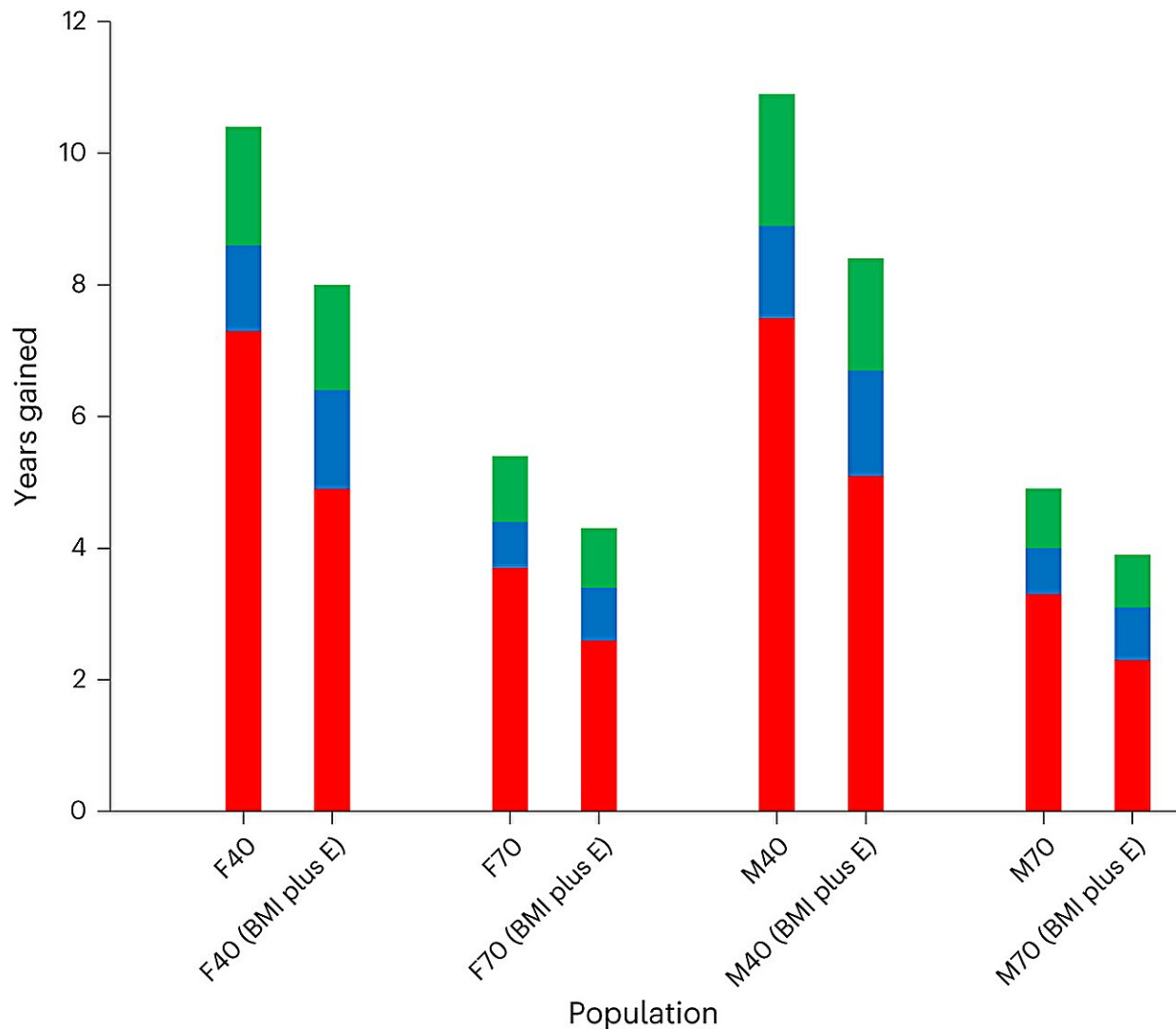


Study suggests changing to a healthier diet could add ten years to your life

November 27 2023, by Bob Yirka



Expected life years gained from dietary changes. Expected life years gained after changing from unhealthy median dietary patterns (red), changing from median dietary patterns to the Eatwell Guide (blue) and changing from the Eatwell

Guide to longevity-associated dietary patterns (green) for 40-year-old female and male adults (F40 and M40, respectively) and 70-year-old female and male adults (F70 and M70, respectively) from the United Kingdom. Both core-adjusted models (adjusted for age, sex, socio-demographic area, smoking, alcohol consumption and activity level) and mediation models (adjusted for energy and body mass index (BMI plus E)) are presented. Credit: *Nature Food* (2023). DOI: 10.1038/s43016-023-00868-w

An international team of public health specialists, addiction researchers, cardiovascular and metabolic health professionals and nutritionists has found that switching from a typical Western diet to a healthier regimen could add 10 years of life for the average middle-aged person. In their study, [reported](#) in the journal *Nature Food*, the group analyzed dietary data for people listed in the UK Biobank study.

Prior research has shown that unhealthy diets lead to more than 75,000 [premature deaths](#) every year in the U.K. alone. Other studies have suggested healthier eating patterns could reduce the risk of early death for people living in the U.S.

In this new effort, the research team accessed data from the UK Biobank study, a long-term study involved in investigating the contributions of genetic predisposition versus environmental exposure regarding the development of disease in people. It has been running since 2006 and involves collecting massive amounts of data from a half-million volunteers in the U.K., all of whom enrolled between the ages of 40 to 69. The plan is to follow the health of the enrollees for at least 30 years.

For this new study, the researchers looked specifically at the [eating habits](#) of all the volunteers in the databank. To learn more about the impact of eating behavior on [life expectancy](#), they grouped people by eating patterns, noting how they shifted over the years.

By comparing outcomes of people who shifted from unhealthy to healthy eating patterns with those of people who did not shift to healthier diets, they found that a shift to healthier eating could add years to life expectancy. More specifically, they found that middle-aged people who shifted from an unhealthy diet to a healthy diet and maintained this pattern added on average nearly 10 years to their life. Switching later in life also added years, but not as many.

The researchers suggest that governments and [health authorities](#) could leverage policy to improve life expectancy for people in general, such as adding taxes to [unhealthy foods](#) and subsidizing those that are healthy.

More information: Lars T. Fadnes et al, Life expectancy can increase by up to 10 years following sustained shifts towards healthier diets in the United Kingdom, *Nature Food* (2023). [DOI: 10.1038/s43016-023-00868-w](#)

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Citation: Study suggests changing to a healthier diet could add ten years to your life (2023, November 27) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-11-healthier-diet-ten-years-life.html>

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