

Meat-based and processed foods linked to Alzheimer's

January 31 2024



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A study has found a strong link between Alzheimer's disease and the daily consumption of meat-based and processed foods. Researchers at Bond University came to the conclusion after examining the diets of 438

Australians—108 with Alzheimer's and 330 in a healthy control group.

The study, [published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease](#), used data from the Australian Imaging Biomarker and Lifestyle Study of Aging which since 2006 has been tracking a group of people and observing the development of Alzheimer's in some participants.

Those diagnosed with Alzheimer's tended to regularly eat foods such as meat pies, sausages, ham, pizza and hamburgers.

They also consumed fewer fruit and vegetables such as oranges, strawberries, avocado, capsicum, cucumber, carrots, cabbage and spinach.

Meanwhile their wine intake—both red and white—was comparatively lower compared to the healthy group.

Alzheimer's disease is a deadly type of dementia that currently has no treatment or cure and affects up to one in 10 Australians aged over 65, rising to three in 10 over 85. Dementia is the leading cause of death and disability in Australians aged over 65.

Lead author of the study and Ph.D. candidate Tahera Ahmed said she hoped the findings would encourage [young people](#) to adopt healthier diets to protect their brains in later life.

"Alzheimer's development in the brain begins in [middle age](#) and its effects can be attributed to an uncontrolled lifestyle from a younger age," she said.

"Raising awareness among the youth about the benefits of consuming [leafy greens](#), organic foods, or home-cooked meals is essential, as opposed to regularly indulging in junk or processed foods.

"Such dietary habits impact brain health and contribute to vascular issues and obesity, highlighting the interconnectedness of these health concerns."

Previous studies have emphasized the positive effects of the Mediterranean or DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet on brain health, but this is believed to be the first to link processed foods and Alzheimer's.

Ahmed, who works in the field of health statistics at the Bond Business School, completed the study under the supervision of Dr. Ping Zhang and Professor Kuldeep Kumar who is a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and a chartered statistician.

Ahmed intends to further her study of Alzheimer's by examining possible links between the disease and sleeping disorders, depression, eating disorders, occupation, and marital status.

There is a personal aspect to her research as her paternal grandmother and an aunt suffered from Alzheimer's. Professor Kumar also lost his father to the disease.

"Sadly, we didn't know it back then—we just thought it was just a dementia issue due to old age," Ahmed said.

More information: Tahera Ahmed et al, Equilibrium of Dietary Patterns Between Alzheimer's Disease Patients and Healthy People: A Comprehensive Analysis Using Multiple Factor Analysis and Classification Modeling, *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* (2024). [DOI: 10.3233/JAD-230634](https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-230634)

Provided by Bond University

Citation: Meat-based and processed foods linked to Alzheimer's (2024, January 31)
retrieved 14 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-01-meat-based-foods-linked-alzheimer.html>

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