Medical Xpress

Study finds relationship between dairy food intake and arterial stiffness

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(Medical Xpress) -- Adults who include dairy foods in their diets might be reducing their arterial stiffness and decreasing their risk of cardiovascular disease, according to a new study by researchers from the University of South Australia, the University of Maine and Australian National University.

The study investigated whether dairy food intake is associated with measures of arterial stiffness, including pulse pressure and carotid-femoral pulse wave velocity, a noninvasive, gold-standard method for measuring arterial stiffness. The investigators challenged the generalization that dairy consumption is associated with cardiovascular disease. Indeed, they predicted that they would find no relation between dairy consumption and arterial stuffiness or less arterial stiffness in

association with dairy consumption.

In a study published in the American Heart Association journal, *Hypertension*, the researchers reported that pulse wave velocity, pulse pressure and systolic blood pressure decreased with increases in dairy food consumption ranging from once a week to more than once daily, independent of demographic and nutrition variables, and other cardiovascular disease risk factors. The lowest pulse wave velocity rates were recorded in those who consumed dairy products daily or up to six times weekly.

There was no association found between dairy food intake and lipid levels, as well as no indication as to which dairy foods — milk, cheese, yogurt and dairy desserts, and cream and ice cream — were effective in decreasing pulse wave velocity.

Further research, including controlled clinical trials, is needed to determine whether dairy food intake is an appropriate dietary intervention for age-related arterial stiffness and cardiovascular disease, and for which groups it is appropriate, according to the researchers. Increasing dairy food intake may not be an avenue to better cardiovascular health for persons who do not tolerate dairy products or for persons with specific patterns of risk factors, they caution.

The study was led by doctoral student in nutrition and psychology Georgina Crichton of the University of South Australia, in collaboration with UMaine psychologist/epidemiologist Merrill Elias, and psychologists Michael Robbins and Gregory Dore; and cardiologist Walter Abhayaratna of Australian National University.

The researchers analyzed the data of nearly 600 participants in the Maine-Syracuse Longitudinal Study, a 35-year community-based study that focuses on relations among risk factors for cardiovascular disease

and cognitive performance across the adult life span. The longitudinal study, initiated by Elias in 1975, is one of the longest-running National Institutes of Health-funded scientific investigations at the University of Maine relating aging, arterial blood pressure and cardiovascular disease risk factors to comprehensive measures of neuropsychological test performance.

The conclusions reached by the investigators are based on their peer-reviewed study and do not represent official views by the American Heart Association or the National Institutes of Health.

Provided by University of Maine

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