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Headlines

**January/February
2016**

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The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) is a dynamic home for physicians and clinicians who are interested in nutrition and related medical disciplines. The Medical Nutrition Council (MNC) is one of ASN's three Councils and serves as the Society's primary mechanism for disseminating clinical nutrition knowledge; promoting policies to prevent and treat disease; training health professionals; and monitoring dietary and disease trends. Our members work on chronic disease, diet and cancer, public health and health care reform, and more – in the United States and around the world.



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ASN Medical Nutrition News is an exclusive benefit for MNC members. This executive summary of noteworthy articles pertaining to the latest nutrition research findings and practices is distributed

Research News

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Research News

Physical Activity and Dietary Determinants of Weight Loss Success in the US General Population

American Journal of Public Health (12/15) Wilson, Patrick

A study of lifestyle behaviors indicates that balanced calorie restriction from all macronutrients paired with physical activity are important for successful long-term weight loss. Dr. Patrick Wilson of the Department of Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University examined lifestyle data from about 8,000 adults from the 2009–2012 National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys. The participants were divided into long-term weight losers, recent weight losers, and overweight or obese individuals who never lost 10 percent or more of their weight. Wilson found that long-term weight losers consumed fewer calories and were more likely to report vigorous leisure activity compared with overweight or obese individuals. Recent weight losers did not differ from overweight or obese individuals regarding absolute calorie intake, but they did report less fat and more physical activity, according to the data.

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Bones of Obese Children May Be in Trouble, UGA Study Finds

EurekaAlert (12/21/15)

Researchers from the University of Georgia (UGA) have found that excess body fat could compromise bone growth in children. The study--led by Joseph Kindler, a doctoral candidate at UGA's College of Family and Consumer Sciences' department of foods and nutrition, and published in the journal *Current Opinion in Endocrinology, Diabetes and Obesity*--looked at how muscle can influence bone geometry and strength

in kids. Researchers also looked at the role of fat in these relationships. The findings indicate that muscle was a strong contributor to bone growth in children, but this relationship may be different in kids with more body fat. Excess fat can be deposited in muscle, which may affect bone growth. Further study of how excess fat can influence the muscle and bone relationship in children is still necessary, but Kindler's review shows there is some kind of connection between them.

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Vitamin D Associates With Improved Quality of Life in Participants With Irritable Bowel Syndrome

BMJ Open Gastroenterology (12/21/2015) Tazzyman, Simon; Richards, Nicholas; Trueman, Andrew R.; et al.

Many patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) have low levels of vitamin D and should be screened for this deficiency, British researchers report. Supplementation with vitamin D could help reduce the impact of IBS on quality of life. In a pilot to gather data to justify a full trial, researchers randomized 51 participants to receive either vitamin D, placebo, or a combination of vitamin D and probiotics. Patients were stratified based on whether they were vitamin D replete or insufficient. Participants underwent blood testing at the start and end of the trial to determine their vitamin D status, and IBS symptoms and diets were assessed by questionnaires. Most participants were vitamin D-deficient, with a significant association between baseline vitamin D level and quality of life. IBS symptoms did not significantly improve over the course of the pilot, but participants with low serum vitamin D levels at baseline reported a greater impact on quality of life compared with participants who were vitamin D replete.

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Mediterranean Diet Impacts Microbiome's Influence on Heart Disease

Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News (12/18/15)

Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic have found that some foods prevalent in the Mediterranean diet may help prevent gut microbes from turning unhealthy foods into metabolic byproducts linked to atherosclerosis. Compounds found in cold-pressed extra virgin olive oils, balsamic vinegars, and grape seed oils may alter the activity of gut microbes and help reduce cardiovascular risks. Gut microbiota converts compounds such as choline and carnitine, found in meat and high-fat dairy products, into a compound called trimethylamine (TMA). The TMA is then converted by host enzymes into the metabolite trimethylamine N-oxide, which accelerates atherosclerosis in animal models and can increase the risk for heart disease in humans. "Many chronic diseases like atherosclerosis, obesity, and diabetes are linked to gut microbes," said senior study author Dr. Stanley Hazen. "This study shows for the first time that one can target a gut microbial pathway to inhibit atherosclerosis and also demonstrates the exciting possibility that we can prevent or retard the progression of diet-induced heart diseases starting in the gut." The findings are published in the journal *Cell*.

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Drinking Coffee Tied to Lower Risk of Death

Reuters (12/17/15) Doyle, Kathryn

A study published in *American Journal of Epidemiology* suggests that regular coffee drinkers may be less likely to die of causes such as heart disease, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases. Researchers led by Dr. Erika Loftfield of the National Cancer Institute in Rockville, Md., looked at data from 90,317 adults who were followed from 1998 through 2009 and reported their coffee intake. After accounting for other factors, including smoking, the researchers found that coffee drinkers were less likely to have died during the study. The risk of death was lowest among participants who drank four to five cups of coffee per day, with a similar association seen among drinkers of decaffeinated coffee.

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Ergocalciferol Supplementation in Hemodialysis Patients With Vitamin D Deficiency

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Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (12/15) Miskulin, Dana C.; Majchrzak, Karen; Tighiouart, Hocine; et al.

Researchers assessed how ergocalciferol supplementation affected epoetin use and other outcomes in 276 patients on hemodialysis with serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D (25(OH)D) of less than 30 ng/ml. Patients were randomized to either six months of ergocalciferol or placebo. Results show that mean serum 25(OH)D increased from 16.0 ng/ml at baseline to 39.2 ng/ml in the ergocalciferol arm. There were no significant changes in the placebo group. The results found no significant change in epoetin dose over six months in either group. Neither group showed significant changes in serum calcium, phosphorus, intact parathyroid hormone, C-reactive protein levels, cinacalcet use, phosphate binder, or calcitriol dose. There appeared to be no difference in the rates of hospitalizations. The study authors concluded that supplementation with ergocalciferol increased serum 25(OH)D levels in patients on hemodialysis with vitamin D insufficiency, though there was no effect on other outcomes studied.

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Low Levels of Vitamin D Linked to Increase in Stress Fractures in Active Individuals

Drug Store News (12/15/15) Johnsen, Michael

A new report suggests that individuals who often engage in high-impact activities should get more vitamin D to reduce the risk of stress fractures. In *The Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery*, investigators describe how they reviewed the medical records of patients with suspected stress fracture. Patients underwent magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) if X-rays did not show acute fracture while there was still a possible stress fracture. Musculoskeletal radiologists independently reviewed the MRI scans, and the investigators confirmed a stress-fracture diagnosis. Approximately 43 percent of the patients had their serum vitamin D levels measured within three months of diagnosis, and most were found to have insufficient or deficient levels of vitamin D. "Based on these findings, we recommend a serum vitamin D level of at least 40 ng/mL to protect against stress fractures, especially for active individuals who enjoy participating in higher impact activities," said lead investigator Jason Miller, fellowship director of the Pennsylvania Intensive Lower Extremity Fellowship.

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Study May Help Reduce Sugar Consumption, Improve Nutritional Health of Children

News-Medical.Net (12/15/15)

Some children may have a lower sensitivity to sweet tastes than others, according to a recent study. Researchers from the Monell Center in Philadelphia studied 216 healthy children aged 7-14 years, finding that sweet taste varied widely and was at least partly related to genetics. The study authors gave each child two cups: one that held distilled water and the other that held a sugar solution. The children were asked to indicate which cup contained a taste, with various sugar concentrations. The lowest concentration that the child could distinguish from water was considered his or her sweet detection threshold. One child needed only 0.005 teaspoons of sugar in a cup of water to detect the sweetness, but another child needed three teaspoons to get the same sensation. The researchers analyzed DNA from 168 of the children and found that sucrose thresholds and sensitivity were related to variations in the TAS2R38 bitter receptor gene. They also found that obese children tended to have a higher sensitivity to sweet tastes. "As sugar becomes more restricted and even regulated in children's diets, the less sugar-sensitive children may get less of a 'sweet signal' and therefore have a harder time dealing with sugar reduction," said study author Danielle Reed, PhD, a behavioral geneticist at Monell. The study is published online in the journal *Nursing Research*.

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Food Allergy in Infants With Atopic Dermatitis: Limitations of Food-Specific IgE Measurements

Pediatrics (12/11/15) Vol. 136, No. 6 Spergel, Jonathan M.; Boguniewicz, Mark; Schneider, Lynda; et al.

Among infants with atopic dermatitis (AD), food-antigen-specific immunoglobulin E

(IgE) measurements do not help predict food allergy development. In a recent study, researchers examined the long-term safety and efficacy of pimecrolimus cream 1% in more than 1,000 infants, aged 3–18 months, with mild-to-severe AD and no history of food allergy. The study followed food-allergy development during a 36-month randomized phase and then in an open-label (OL) phase of up to 33 months. Levels of IgE for cow's milk, egg white, peanut, wheat, seafood mix, and soybean were measured at baseline and the end of each phase. By the end of the OL phase, 15.9 percent of infants had developed at least one food allergy, with allergy to peanut being the most common, at 6.6 percent. Levels of IgE for milk, egg, and peanut increased with AD severity, but positive predictive values for IgE decision points were low, the authors report.

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Walnuts May Cut Diabetes, Heart Risk

MedPage Today (12/02/15) Rapaport, Lisa

Consuming the equivalent of a handful of walnuts every day could have health benefits for people at risk of diabetes, researchers report in *BMJ Open Diabetes Research and Care*. Investigators randomly assigned 31 men and 81 women at high risk for diabetes to a reduced calorie diet, either with or without nutrition counseling. Within the two groups, half of the participants were randomly assigned to add walnuts to their diet for six months. Participants then switched groups after a three-month break from the experiment. People who added 56 grams of walnuts (2 ounces, or about 14 walnuts) to their daily diet for six months showed improved blood-vessel function and reduced LDL cholesterol. Eating walnuts did not appear to improve blood pressure or blood sugar. Still, despite being a high-calorie food, walnuts were not associated with weight gain. The study was led by Dr. David L. Katz of the Yale University Prevention Research Center in Derby, Conn., and funded by the California Walnut Commission.

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Vasculoprotective Effects of Dietary Cocoa Flavanols in Patients on Hemodialysis

Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (12/15) Rassaf, Tienush; Rammos, Christos; Hendgen-Cotta, Ulrike B.; et al.

New research indicates that consumption of supplements rich in cocoa flavanol (CF) can mitigate endothelial dysfunction in patients with end-stage renal disease. For the study, German researchers enrolled 57 patients and randomized some to consume beverages with 900 mg CF per study day, and others to consume a CF-free placebo. Acute ingestion was found to improve flow-mediated dilation (FMD) by 53 percent, and it did not affect blood pressure or heart rate. Thirty-day ingestion of CF increased baseline FMD by 18 percent, with reduced diastolic BP and increased heart rate. Researchers observed no effects for placebo. Acute ingestion of CF during hemodialysis helped to improve hemodialysis-induced vascular dysfunction. Further studies with more patients could test whether these effects translate into an improved cardiovascular prognosis in this population.

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Landscape of Dietary Factors Associated With Risk of Gastric Cancer

European Journal of Cancer (12/15) Vol. 51, No. 18, P. 2820 Fang, Xuexian; Wei, Jiayu; He, Xuyan; et al.

Researchers have found strong evidence that diet may reduce or increase the risk for gastric cancer. Their meta-analysis on the associations between 67 dietary factors and gastric cancer risk included 76 prospective cohort studies published through June 2015. These studies included 32,758 gastric cancer cases among 6.3 million participants, with follow-up lasting up to three decades. The dietary factors examined in the studies included vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, salt, alcohol, tea, coffee, and nutrients. Results indicated that consumption of total fruit and white vegetables was inversely associated with gastric cancer risk. The researchers also found concordant positive associations between high-salt foods and gastric cancer risk. There was a strong effect of alcohol consumption, particularly beer and liquor but not wine, on gastric cancer risk compared with non-drinkers. The risk of gastric cancer appeared to increase by 12 percent per 5 g/day increment of dietary salt intake or 5 percent per 10 g/day increment of alcohol consumption. In addition, a 100 g/day increment of fruit consumption was inversely

associated with 5 percent reduction of risk.

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