How Does Plant-Based Diet Quality Affect Mortality Risk in People with Diabetes or Prediabetes? Transcript

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Study Overview and Participants

Here's a new study looking at plant-based diets and the risk of death amongst those with diabetes or pre-diabetes. They included 4,621 people with Diabetes and 8,061 people With Pre-Diabetes from the American NHANES cohort.

Their diets were assessed with two 24-hour diet recalls and were scored according to how plant based they were and which types of plant foods they focused on.

Healthy Plant-Based Diet and Lower Mortality

Over a median of 7.2 years of follow-up amongst Those who had higher Healthy Plant-Based Diet Index scores, so those who ate more healthy plant foods like fruits and vegetables, and less of the animal foods, had a 41% lower risk of dying during the study compared to those with low scores.

And amongst those of pre-diabetes, higher scores were associated with a 31% risk.

Unhealthy Plant-Based Diet and Higher Mortality

On the other hand, amongst those with diabetes, higher unhealthy plant-based diet index scores, so those who ate more of those less healthy plant foods, had an 88% higher risk of dying during the study compared to low scores while there was a 63% high risk amongst with pre-diabetes.

And this was after adjusting for confounding variables like smoking, alcohol, and BMI. As for individual food groups, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and seafood were associated with a lower risk in people with diabetes or pre-diabetes, while coffee and tea were also associated in pre diabetes and surprisingly so was refined grains.

Food Group Findings and Takeaway

However, the category of refined grain is quite broad so it's not clear if it was just certain types of products that were beneficial. Conversely, fruit juice was associated with a higher risk in people with diabetes.

But overall, this research suggests that diet centered on healthy plant foods may lower the risk of mortality amongst those with Diabetes or Prediabetes.