New Meta-Analysis Says Animal Protein is Superior! Transcript

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Meta-analysis on plant vs animal protein

Many of you sent me this post suggesting that plant protein is worse than animal protein for strength gains. The post was highlighting findings from this recent meta-analysis, so let's go over it.

They only included randomized controlled trials, and while there were 31 studies in the entire paper, only 15 were included in meta analyses comparing plant to animal.

and they found that plant protein appeared to be less effective for strength gains, but was similarly effective in endurance performance compared to animal protein.

But this is where we can dive into some of the potential issues.

Concerns about study quality and outliers

A meta-analysis is only as good as the studies it includes, and the results of this meta analysis may have largely been driven by just one or two of these studies, with the study suggesting potentially the largest difference between animal and plant proteins being driven an outlier result which it was criticized for.

And when the researchers corrected for that, the result was attenuated and no longer statistically significant, which may or may not have a significant impact on the results of this meta-analysis.

They also provided very little information in their methods section, Which I'm surprised even passed peer review. But from what we can garner, they did not measure the effects in the way that it's normally done for this type of analysis.

And if you want to read more about that I'll leave a couple notes in description below. but that alone may be enough to question the resulting altogether.

Small effect size and practical impact

But for sake of argument, let's just say the methods were sound. What would that mean? For one, the effect was quite small, so it wouldn't actually mean a lot for most people.

But if you were looking to absolutely maximize your strength gains, you could just eat a little more protein, and that would compensate. Which brings me to my last point about this meta-analysis.

They included studies with different levels of protein intake, some being much lower than the 1.

Higher protein intake levels for strength athletes

6 grams per kilogram of body weight that is typically recommended for strength athletes. And the trials we have comparing plant-based diets to omnivorous diets at that level of protein intake have not demonstrated any significant differences between plant and animal protein.

So for people who are serious about gaining muscle and strength, if you're eating that levels of proteins, it doesn't seem to matter whether it's from plants or animals.