Vegans and Vegetarians Have Lower Risk of Premature Death! (NEW STUDY) Transcript

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Study Overview and Diet Groups

How do vegan and vegetarian diets affect long-term health compared to omnivorous diets? Well, we have an update from the Adventist Health Study 2. This study includes 88,400 Seventh Day Adventists from across North America who were followed from as early as 2002 until as late as 2015.

Mortality Results by Diet Type

which includes vegans, lacto-ovo vegetarians who consume dairy and eggs, pescatarians who also consume fish, and semi-vegetarians, who occasionally eat meat.

Had an 11% lower risk of dying during the study, which may have largely been driven by the vegetarian men, Who had a 19% low risk compared to the omnivorous men.

And the vegan men specifically had an impressive 28% risk lower than the omnivores men On the other hand, Pescatarans had the most impressive results amongst women, with a 9% less risk than omniversaries.

However, the different types of these pro-vegetarian style diets were not necessarily compared to each other in this study, and the results do overlap to a fair degree, meaning that we can't necessarily say that pescatarian is better than vegan or vegan was better then pescetarian, for example.

Lifestyle Factors and Confounding

There are a number of comparisons between those eating a more vegetarian-style diet and those eat an omnivorous diet that do point towards the vegetarians being more clearly healthier.

It's also notable that the vegetarian as a whole, on average, had higher BMI, exercised a bit less, and consumed more alcohol, although their overall intake was still fairly low.

compared to the omnivores. This is counter to common claim I see on social media and that I will probably see down below in the comments stating that vegetarians did better simply because they live healthier lifestyles.

That wasn't necessarily the case here. But they adjust for many important confounding variables in their analysis anyway, but I just thought I'd mention that because I know someone's going to bring it up.

And finally, for individual causes of death, at age 65, the vegetarians exhibited a lower risk of deaths due to kidney failure, infectious disease, diabetes, and certain cardiovascular diseases with no clearly identifiable risks.

Cause-Specific Death Risks at Different Ages

At age 85, they also had a low risk for dying due kidney failures, certain diabetes and cardiovascular disease including ischemic heart disease but had higher risk to die due stroke or dementia.

Although the results for the latter outcomes were not statistically significant for vegans or pescatarians specifically, but it is within the realm of possibility.

This may partly explain why the benefits of a vegetarian diet on all-cause mortality were more substantial at the lower ages and then more neutral at higher ages.

The authors do speculate about a number of potential reasons for this, including a low B12 status if they weren't supplementing appropriately, but we don't really have the data to look at that in this study.

Interpretation and Takeaways

Another possible explanation I would throw out there is that those meat eaters who were susceptible to, say, eventually dying of a stroke or dementia just died of other causes earlier on.

And the authors do state that based on these results, pro-vegetarian style dietary patterns may help reduce the risk of premature death and get you to those older ages in the first place.

But they won't necessarily make you superhuman and far extend that max life expectancy. Nonetheless, this is just another reason to adopt a more plant-based approach to one's diet.