

Results from a new study indicate that higher whole grain consumption is associated with lower total and cardiovascular disease mortality in US men and women.

Higher whole grain intake is associated with increased life expectancy and a lower risk of death from heart disease

Previous research has shown a strong correlation between high whole grain intake and a reduced risk of degenerative diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD). However, less is known about its potential association with mortality risk.

In a new study published online in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, researchers examined the association of whole grain intake and the risk of premature mortality. Researchers evaluated data from two large cohort studies that included participants from the Nurses' Health Study (74, 341 women) and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study (43,744 men) conducted between 1984 and 2010. All participants were free of cancer and cardiovascular disease at the beginning of the study. Dietary habits, including information on the type and frequency of intake from specific whole grains, were updated every two to four years using a validated food frequency questionnaire. Frequency of eating specific whole grains, including wheat, rye, barley, corn, oats, buckwheat, rice, popcorn, amaranth, psyllium, and added bran and wheat germ were documented.

After adjustments were made for age, smoking, body mass index, physical activity, and modified Alternate Healthy Eating Index score, higher whole grain intake was associated with lower total and CVD mortality. Participants whose whole grain intake was in the top 20% had a 9% lower risk of premature mortality than those whose levels were among the lowest 20% of intake. When analyzing risk of death from cardiovascular disease specifically, those with the highest grain intake had a 15% decrease in mortality risk compared to the lowest intake group. It is estimated that every serving (28 grams/day) of whole grain consumption was associated with a 5% lower total mortality or a 9% lower CVD mortality.

The results from these large studies confirm the notion that whole grain consumption is associated with disease prevention and may extend life expectancy by decreasing cardiovascular disease and overall mortality risk in adult men and women.

Wu H et al. Association Between Dietary Whole Grain Intake and Risk of Mortality: Two Large Prospective Studies in US Men and Women. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2015 Jan 5. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2014.6283.