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Plant-based diets and healthy living – Highlights from Loma Linda University lifestyle medicine research

Statement of the Problem: Long-term, large-scale studies on the connections between lifestyle, diet, and disease are difficult to conduct and interpret, particularly due to confounding effects from smoking and alcohol use. Loma Linda University has been a leader in conducting such studies, by involving nearly 100,000 church members from the Seventh-day Adventist faith from across Canada and the United States. The Seventh-Day Adventist church encourages a vegetarian diet and discourages smoking and alcohol use, which helps to eliminate confusion between the effects of smoking and alcohol and the effects from different dietary patterns. The purpose of this workshop is to share the methods and key results of multiple lifestyle medicine studies from Loma Linda University, including the five Adventist Health Studies. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A review of Loma Linda University lifestyle medicine research was conducted, including the five Adventist

Health Studies (Adventist Mortality Study; Adventist Health Study-1; Adventist Health Air Pollution Study; Adventist Health Study-2; Adventist Religion and Health Study). Findings: Plant-based diets are connected to multiple positive health benefits including weight loss and decreased risk of coronary heart disease, multiple cancers, diabetes, hypertension, and all-cause mortality. A significant positive association was shown between the consumption of eggs and all-cause mortality and in men; increased consumption of beef was associated with fatal heart disease. Conclusion & Significance: Healthcare providers and their patient often wonder what diet is the best to recommend and/or follow. The research out of Loma Linda, including the Adventist Health Studies, has helped to better elucidate the connections between vegetarian, plant-based diets and health.

Biography

Jennifer Chevinsky is a preventive medicine resident physician at Loma Linda University Health. She has gained expertise in preventive medicine, population health, and lifestyle medicine through the residency curriculum as well as through prestigious internships with the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ), the United State Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the ABC News Medical Unit. She was appointed to the Organization of Resident Representatives Administrative Board for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) as a national representative of preventive medicine. She has conducted extensive research in areas of bioethics, health media, and public health.

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