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The effects of diet on sleep quality and memory

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Nutrition has an effect on a wide range of physiological and cognitive mechanisms. Plant based diets are known to be associated with a healthy cardiovascular and cerebrovascular system. Studies on the Mediterranean diet have shown that diets high in fruits and vegetables are linked with better cognitive performance and lower rates of neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease. Most studies have focused on vegetarian or pescatarian diets while vegan diets, which exclude all animal products, have not been investigated. This study assessed verbal memory and sleep quality in a cohort of sixty two adults aged 40 and above who were split into strictly-defined dietary categories: Vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian, omnivores with low meat/fish consumption and omnivores with high meat/fish consumption. Verbal memory was assessed using the California Verbal Learning Test (CVLT) and sleep quality was evaluated using Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). Participants were allocated to dietary groups based on a modified scoring system using the Mediterranean Diet Adherence Screener (MEDAS) questionnaire. Three aspects of the memory measured by the CVLT were immediate recall, delayed recall and recognition. Only delayed recall showed a significant effect for diet; There were no significant effects for memory once covariates (gender, education level and sleep quality) were included. Gender was found to be a highly significant predictor of immediate and delayed recall. This may have been due to significant differences in dietary groups of males and females. The sample size, once diluted by the five diet categories, may have been insufficient to capture differences between some of the groups. Further research is needed to elucidate the protective role of plant-based diets on cognitive functions and sleep quality.

Biography

Pinar Sengul a Turkish national who has lived and studied in Germany and, most recently, in London where Pinar Sengul hope to take up permanent residence. Pinar is passionate about neuroscience and psychology, and specifically on the impact of diet on life-quality and performance. Pinar have a strong background of academic writing, data collection and statistical analysis. Pinar is multilingual, speaking fluent English and German, as well as my native Turkish, with lower-level abilities in French, Russian and Japanese. Pinar is currently looking for an (ideally, funded) PhD position in order to continue my research on "The effect of nutrition on neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's".

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