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Assessment of dietary factors, dietary practices and exercise on mental distress in young adults versus matured adults: A cross-sectional study

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Abstract

mental health differently in these two populations.

Objectives: To study dietary intake, dietary practices and exercise in young adults (YA) (18–29 years) versus matured adults (MA) (30 years and older) in relation to mental distress. Another aim was to assess whether mental well-being potentially stimulates healthy eating, healthy practices, and exercising.

Methods: An anonymous internet-based survey was sent through social media platforms to different professional and social group networks. Best-fit models were constructed using the backward regression analysis to assess the relationship between dietary variables, exercise, and mental distress in YA versus MA.

Results: YA mood seems to be dependent on food that increases availability of neurotransmitter precursors and concentrations in the brain (such as frequent meat consumption and exercise, respectively). However, MA mood may be more reliant on food that increases availability of antioxidants (fruits) and abstinence of food that inappropriately activates the sympathetic nervous system (coffee, high glycemic index, and skipping breakfast).

Discussion and conclusion: Level of brain maturation and age-related changes in brain morphology and functions may necessitate dietary adjustments for improving mental well-being.