The Gut Brain Connection: Does our diet effect our mood?

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INTRODUCTION

Recent research studies have revealed that there is validity to the claim that "you are what you eat". In fact, emerging science suggests that there is evidence supporting that eating a nutrient dense healthy diet impacts one's mental health. The goal of this research is to explore how the foods we consume affect our emotions. More specifically this poster focuses on the gut-brain connection and how individuals with depression are impacted by their food choices. To investigate the link between nutrition and depression, a literature review of three research studies was completed. Evaluation of each of these studies reveal that proper nutrition can improve symptoms in individuals diagnosed with depression.

METHODS

Data Collection
- Computerized search using the key terms of "diet and depression", "the gut brain connection" and "nutritional psychiatry".

Literature Review
- Three research studies were selected that met three criteria 1) Current within the past 5 years 2) Evidence-based research 3) Explored link between depression and diet
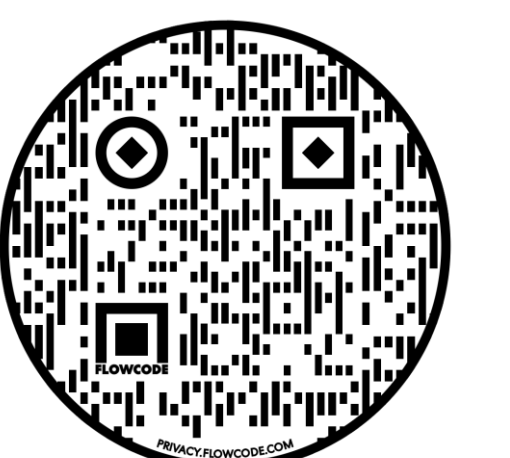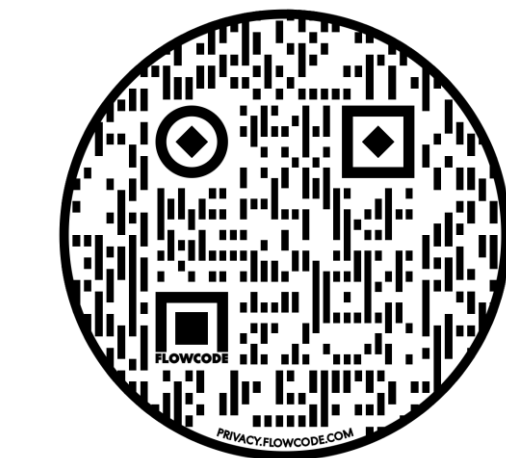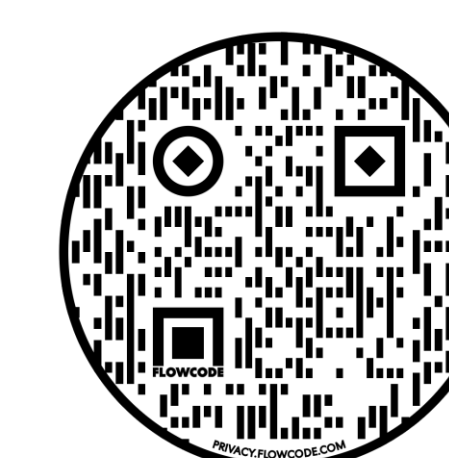
Synthesis & Analysis
- Each of the articles was reviewed and a comparative analysis was performed to assess the correlation between diet and depression

RESULTS

- The SMILES trial reveals that the intervention of a modified Mediterranean diet can be an effective therapeutic treatment for individuals with major depressive disorders.
- The development of the Antidepressant Food Scale shows that the consumption of certain nutrient dense foods, such as fish, Brussel sprouts, and leafy greens, can potentially help treat and prevent depressive disorders.
- The systematic review of observational studies, headed by Camille Lassale, concluded that there is evidence supporting the fact that adhering to a healthy diet like the Mediterranean diet can decrease symptoms of clinical depression.
- Each of the studies also mentioned the gut-brain connection and concluded, that the gut microbiome plays an integral role in brain health.
- Each of the three studies results showed that eating a diet comprised of nutrient-dense whole foods is beneficial to treating depressive disorders

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, findings from each of these research studies support the claim that diet does in fact effect our emotions. The Mediterranean diet has proven to be a unique treatment option for individuals diagnosed with depression. Nutritional psychiatry is a growing field of study, but as more research is conducted, it becomes more evident the crucial impact that diet has on the brain. Therefore, it is important to nourish our body and minds with nutrient-dense foods and keep our gut microbiome healthy.

HEALTHFUL TIPS

- Below are a few resources on healthy eating habits and possible ways to combat depression through food. Use your phone camera to scan the QR code or follow the links.

https://drhyman.com/blog/2018/11/28/can-you-beat-depression-with-food/
https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/diet-and-depression-2018022213309
https://oldwayspt.org/resources/oldways-mediterranean-diet-pyramid

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