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Abstract

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Trends in Legume Consumption Among Ethnically Diverse Adults in a Longitudinal Cohort Study in Australia

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The aim of this study was to investigate changes in legume consumption among a population of ethnically diverse middle-aged adults in an urban area of Australia. The Melbourne Collaborative Cohort Study is a prospective cohort study of people aged 40-69 years at baseline (1990-1994)(n=41,514 at baseline), with follow up 13 years later (2003-2007). One quarter of the participants were migrants from Southern Europe, in particular Greece and Italy. Diet was assessed using a 121 item Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ), including 2 questions about legume consumption. The FFQ was previously validated in a population of ethnically diverse participants. At baseline 34% of all participants reported never consuming legumes and this reduced to 12.4% at follow up. Greek and Italian born participants had the highest baseline intake of legume consumption (2.56 and 1.87 serves per week, respectively) and these groups also reported the highest negative change in weekly legume consumption over 13 years of follow-up (-1.29 and -0.65 times per week respectively, $p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that as people from Southern Europe reside longer in Australia, there is a tendency towards acculturation, with people reporting less adherence to the traditional high legume consumption observed in Mediterranean countries.