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Abstract

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Adherence to Dietary Guidelines and Successful Aging

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Increases in life expectancy make it important to remain disease-free and fully-functional for as long as possible. We aimed to prospectively examine the relationship between overall diet quality (reflecting adherence to dietary guidelines) and successful aging in a population-based cohort of older adults. We used 10-year follow-up data from 2519 adults, aged 49+ years and free of cancer, coronary artery disease and stroke at the baseline examination. Dietary data were collected using a semi-quantitative food-frequency questionnaire. Total diet scores (TDS) were allocated for intake of selected food groups and nutrients for each participant as described in the national dietary guidelines. Higher scores indicated closer adherence to dietary guidelines. Successful aging was defined as the absence of: disability, depressive symptoms, cognitive impairment, respiratory symptoms and chronic diseases (cancer, coronary artery disease and stroke). After 10 years, 842 participants had died and 281 participants qualified as successfully aging. After multivariable-adjustment, each unit increase in TDS at baseline was associated with a 10% increased odds of successful aging 10 years later, odds ratio, OR, 1.10 (95% confidence intervals, CI, 1.03-1.18). Participants in the highest (high adherence to dietary guidelines) versus lowest quartile of TDS at baseline had 2-fold higher odds of aging successfully after 10 years, OR 2.41 (95% CI 1.40-4.17). In summary, greater compliance with published dietary guidelines was associated with an increased likelihood of good functional status and absence of chronic diseases in older age.