

The Dietary Effects on Mood

By: Redza Remea

Word Count: 689

It is well known that dietary choices can have a large impact on the development of an individual, but these links extend much further than most people would think. In addition to physical well-being, dietary choices can affect an individual's emotional well-being in many ways as well. The lack of glucose in the blood can lead to short-term behavioural impairments such as the lack of self-control and willpower. The lack of these sugars could also lead to increased aggression and irritability in the affected individual. Furthermore, the lack of certain chemicals in the blood also reportedly increase the likelihood of depression in people.

According to Matthew Gailliot, a social psychologist, the lack of blood sugar in the human body has been reported to lead to short-term behavioural impairments in self-control and willpower. Self-control and willpower are needed for a number of social behaviours such as being polite and quitting bad habits. In an experiment conducted by Gailliot, actions such as emotional regulation thought suppression and other social behaviours resulted in a decrease in glucose levels in the blood of the individuals observed. Further actions requiring self-control became impaired and less effective as the glucose levels decreased in the blood. This experiment suggests that actions requiring self-control and willpower are dependent on glucose to be done effectively. Meaning, the lack of glucose in the blood can lead to the impairment of an individual's social abilities. Gailliot's studies conclude that the lack of glucose in the blood leads to less self-control and willpower in individuals.

In addition to this, Brad Bushman, a professor of psychology at Ohio State University also suggests that decreased glucose in blood could be linked to aggression and irritability. Prior to the experiment conducted by Bushman, 100 couples were taught how to measure their own blood sugar levels twice a day. They were given 51 pins and a voodoo doll and were asked to stab the doll every time they felt angry with their partner, in order to measure the number of aggressive impulses. After 21 days, the couples were invited to play a game in a lab against a computer, thinking it was their partner. The winner of the game was allowed to blast an uncomfortable noise into the ears of the opposing side at varying volumes and durations. This helped measure the level of aggressive behaviour. Results showed that the individuals with lower levels of glucose in their blood tended to have more aggressive impulses and stabbed their voodoo dolls more often. These individuals also gave longer and louder noise blasts to their partner during the lab game. This experiment proves that less blood sugar in the form of glucose led to more aggressive impulsiveness and behaviour in individuals.

Finally, research has shown that certain diets can also be beneficial to an individual's emotional well-being as well. According to psychologists on the BMC Medicine, the "Mediterranean diet has been associated with a lower risk of depression". A study was conducted over a period of 23 months in order to investigate the link between mood and diet in 84 adults. In this experiment, the "daily servings of cereals, vegetables, fruits, dairy products and meat" were all recorded while the participants' daily moods were measured using a Visual Analogue Scale. The results gathered from the study show that diets with higher concentrations of saturate fats and calories led to a higher risk of depression. While "people who consumed more water, ascorbic acid, tryptophan, magnesium and selenium" resulted in a better overall mood. This study suggests that the dietary choices of the participants have a noticeable impact on the moods of the individuals.

In conclusion, the lack of glucose in the blood can lead to the individual being able to exhibit less self-control and willpower as proven by Matthew Gailliot. According to the experiment conducted by

Brad Bushman, less blood sugar can also lead to a higher likelihood of aggressive impulsiveness and behaviour. Furthermore, studies show that certain diets such as the Mediterranean diet can assist in combating depression. Thus, it can be concluded that dietary choices can have a large impact on an individual's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Works Cited Page

DiDonato, T. E., Ph.D. (2014, April 17). Is Your Partner Hungry for a Fight? Retrieved from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/meet-catch-and-keep/201404/is-your-partner-hungry-fight?collection=1073403>.

Food and mood. (2017, December). Retrieved from <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/#.Wv50KSAIHU>

Gailliot, M. T., Baumeister, R. F., DeWall, C. N., Maner, J. K., Plant, E. A., Tice, D. M., . . . Schmeichel, B. J. (2007, February). Self-control relies on glucose as a limited energy source. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17279852>.

Gibson, E. L. (2006, August 30). Emotional influences on food choice: Sensory, physiological and psychological pathways. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0031938406000102>

Sanchez-Villegas, A., & Martínez-González, M. A. (2013, January 03). Diet, a new target to prevent depression? Retrieved from <https://bmcmmedicine.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1741-7015-11-3>

Wenk, G. L., Ph.D. (2015, April 8). Recent Links Between Food and Mood. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-brain-food/201504/recent-links-between-food-and-mood?collection=1073403>