RISK FACTORS

Fried foods not linked to CHD in Spain

Consumption of foods fried in olive oil or sunflower oil does not increase the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). This finding from the Spanish cohort of EPIC has been reported in the *BMJ*.

Frying is a complex cooking process that modifies the nutritional content of food and has been associated with risk factors for CHD including obesity, hypertension, and dyslipidemias. However, few data exist on the relationship between consumption of fried food and cardiovascular outcomes.

EPIC is an ongoing project designed to assess the role of diet in major chronic diseases in ten European countries. Guallar-Castillón and colleagues analyzed data from 40,757 healthy Spanish participants who were enrolled in this study between 1992 and 1996, and followed up until 2004. Five geographical areas were represented to account for dietary differences between northern and southern, coastal and inland, and urban and rural areas of Spain.

On average, daily consumption of fried food was 138 g (7% of nutritional intake). As might be expected in a Mediterranean

country, participants reported using olive oil (62%) or sunflower/vegetable oil (38%) for frying; therefore, no data for the effect of animal fats were available. No significant associations were found between the amount of fried food consumed and CHD events or all-cause mortality. This finding was consistent irrespective of the type of oil used or the type of food consumed, and was not altered by multivariate adjustment for possible confounders, such as sex, age, BMI, and energy intake.

The researchers suggest that the postulated beneficial and detrimental effects of frying with vegetable oils might offset each other; however, they caution that their findings are applicable only to Mediterranean countries where diet is similar to that in Spain.

Alexandra King

Original article Guallar-Castillón, P. *et al.* Consumption of fried foods and risk of coronary heart disease: Spanish cohort of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition study. *BMJ* 344, e363 (2012)