A traditional Sami diet score as a determinant of mortality in a general northern Swedish population.

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Abstract:

To examine the relationship between "traditional Sami" dietary pattern and mortality in a general northern Swedish population.

Population-based cohort study.

We examined 77,319 subjects from the Västerbotten Intervention Program (VIP) cohort. A traditional Sami diet score was constructed by adding 1 point for intake above the median level of red meat, fatty fish, total fat, berries and boiled coffee, and 1 point for intake below the median of vegetables, bread and fibre. Hazard ratios (HR) for mortality were calculated by Cox regression.

Increasing traditional Sami diet scores were associated with slightly elevated all-cause mortality in men [Multivariate HR per 1-point increase in score 1.04 (95% CI 1.01-1.07), p=0.018], but not for women [Multivariate HR 1.03 (95% CI 0.99-1.07), p=0.130]. This increased risk was approximately equally attributable to cardiovascular disease and cancer, though somewhat more apparent for cardiovascular disease mortality in men free from diabetes, hypertension and obesity at baseline [Multivariate HR 1.10 (95% CI 1.01-1.20), p=0.023].

A weak increased all-cause mortality was observed in men with higher traditional Sami diet scores. However, due to the complexity in defining a "traditional Sami" diet, and the limitations of our questionnaire for this purpose, the study should be considered exploratory, a first attempt to relate a "traditional Sami" dietary pattern to health endpoints. Further investigation of cohorts with more detailed information on dietary and lifestyle items relevant for traditional Sami culture is warranted.

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