Food selection associated with sense of coherence in adults.

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Abstract: BACKGROUND: Favorable dietary habits promote health, whereas unfavorable habits link to various chronic diseases. An individual's "sense of coherence" (SOC) is reported to correlate with prevalence of some diseases to which dietary habits are linked. However, understanding what determines an individual's dietary preferences and how to change his/her behavior remains limited. The aim of the present study was to evaluate associations between dietary intake and SOC in adults. METHODS: Diet intake was recorded by an 84-item semi-quantitative food frequency questionnaire and SOC was measured by the 13-item Antonovsky questionnaire in 2,446 men and 2,545 women (25-74 years old) from the population based northern Sweden MONICA screening in 1999. RESULTS: Intakes of energy, total and saturated fat, ascorbic acid, sucrose, and servings of fruits, vegetables, cereals, and sweets correlated with SOC among women, whereas intakes of total and saturated fat, ascorbic acid, fiber, and alcohol, and servings of fruits, vegetables, bread, bread and cereals, fish, and potatoes correlated with SOC among men. With a few exceptions, intakes of these nutrients/foods were significantly explained by SOC quartile scores in linear GLM models. Both women and men classified into the highest SOC quartile had significantly higher age-BMI-education standardized mean intakes of vegetables than those in the lowest quartiles. Women in the highest SOC quartile also had higher intake of fruits but lower intakes of energy, total and saturated fat, sucrose, and sweets. Projection to latent structures (PLS) multivariate modeling of intakes of the 84 food items and food aggregates simultaneously on SOC scores supported low SOC to coincide with a presumably less health promoting dietary preference, e.g. intake of pizza, soft drinks, candies, sausages for main course, hamburgers, mashed potato, chips and other snacks, potato salad, French fries, whereas men and women with high SOC scores were characterized by e.g. high intake of rye crisp whole meal bread, boiled potato, vegetables, berries, and fruits. CONCLUSION: Both men and women in the highest, as compared with the lowest, SOC score quartile reported more "healthy" food choices. Dietary habits for individuals in the lowest SOC quartile therefore may render a higher risk for various endemic diseases.

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