

The Impact of Diet on Cardiovascular Disease Risk in Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury

Abstract

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Abstract

The prevalence of chronic disease has increased as individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCIs) experience longer survival. Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of their morbidity and mortality. A necessary component of any CVD prevention is a healthy diet. This can be especially challenging for persons experiencing body composition changes, low resting metabolic rates, functional impairments, and barriers to healthy living; together these comprise an obesogenic environment. This monograph will discuss critical features of a healthy diet and dietary interventions providing risk reduction after SCI. If well designed and appropriately supported, diet can make a significant contribution to CVD prevention.

Summary

Research on the role of diet in management of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is in its relative infancy. Existing evidence, albeit sparse, has been focused on intake patterns and diminished energy expenditure of people with chronic SCI. Larger studies are needed to examine the resting metabolic rate (RMR) after SCI and determine the extent to which it is affected by gender and varying levels and completeness of injury. Further, it is important to learn whether sustained elevation of RMR can be stimulated by physical activity or increased lean tissue mass and the role that might be played by increasing energy expenditure on reducing fat mass and providing CVD prevention.