



## 8. DIET AND DEPRESSION

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**Introduction.** Depression is a mental disorder which is characterized by losing pleasure, mood or interest in activities usually for a long period of time. According to the World Health Organization approximately 280 million people worldwide have depression. Emerging research suggests that diet plays a crucial role in mental health outcomes, particularly in relation to depression. The study focuses on exploring the impact of nutritional factors on depressive symptoms and identifying potential mechanisms underlying this association.

**Aim of study.** The aim of this study is to highlight the relation between diet and depression.

**Methods and materials.** A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify relevant studies examining the relationship between diet and depression. Various electronic databases, including PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, 3MedScape, Elsevier were consulted for articles published between 2010 and 2023

**Results.** People with depression sometimes have a diet which is far from adequate, so their nutritional habits might contribute to their disease. Diets characterized by high consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and lean proteins, such as the Mediterranean diet, were consistently associated with a lower risk of depression. Conversely, diets high in processed foods, saturated fats, and added sugars were linked to an increased risk of depressive symptoms. Nutritional deficiencies, including omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, vitamin D, zinc, and magnesium, were also identified as potential contributors to depression. Furthermore, some studies suggest that low level of serotonin increase risk for suicide, because decreased levels of this neurotransmitter can contribute to a diminished sensitivity towards future consequences, thereby promoting risky, impulsive, and aggressive behaviors that can ultimately culminate in suicide—an extreme manifestation of impulsive aggression directed towards oneself.

**Conclusion.** Diet plays a significant role in the development and management of depression. Adopting a healthy dietary pattern, consisting of nutrient-dense foods, may have a protective effect against depression. Conversely, nutritional deficiencies and unhealthy dietary choices appear to be associated with an increased risk of depressive symptoms. Further research is needed to better understand the underlying mechanisms and to develop targeted dietary interventions for individuals with depression