

Dietary Habits and Depression Symptoms in Middle Aged Women: Assessing Positive and Negative Correlations

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Introduction

Women in their middle years frequently experience particular difficulties that may make them more susceptible to depressive symptoms. Feelings of sadness and mood disorders can be exacerbated by hormonal fluctuations, family obligations, work-related stress, and social demands. Developing successful interventions to support mental health in this population requires an understanding of how food habits can mitigate or exacerbate depressed symptoms. Similarly, lower rates of depression have been linked to the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which limits sodium intake and prioritizes fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. These diets are high in nutrients, which promotes healthy brain function and neurotransmitter control, which may lower the likelihood of depression symptoms. However, some dietary patterns that include a lot of processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and unhealthy fats have been associated with a higher risk of depression in middle-aged women. The Western diet, which is characterized by overindulgence in processed and red meats, sugary snacks, and fried meals, has been demonstrated to impair neuroplasticity and increase inflammation, which can lead to mood disorders [1].

Additionally, diets heavy in sugar and processed carbs can cause blood sugar levels to fluctuate, which can cause mood swings and energy dips. Long-term ingestion of certain foods may throw off the balance of neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, making depression symptoms worse. Several observational studies have looked into the connection between middle-aged women's eating habits and depressive symptoms. The data for less beneficial dietary patterns is more mixed, but the findings about the protective effects of healthy dietary patterns like the Mediterranean and DASH diets on mental health have generally been consistent. According to certain research, following a Western diet is positively associated with an increased risk of depression, especially in women. Confounding variables like lifestyle choices, socioeconomic level, and underlying medical issues, however, could affect these correlations [2].

Depression is a major global public health issue that affects people of all ages, genders, and socioeconomic situations. Because middle-aged women confront additional difficulties, such as hormonal fluctuations, caregiving duties, work commitments, and cultural expectations, depression is a particularly urgent problem for them. Understanding the part that dietary patterns play in the onset and treatment of depression symptoms in this population has drawn more attention from academics in recent years. Numerous epidemiological studies have looked into the relationship between middle-aged women's eating habits and depressive symptoms. According to a noteworthy study that used cross-sectional data analysis from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, middle-aged women who followed a healthy dietary pattern that included a high intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins were less likely to experience depressive symptoms. On the other hand, depression symptoms were positively correlated with following a Western diet

that is high in processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and saturated fats [3].

Building on these findings, longitudinal studies have shed more light on the association between middle-aged women's eating habits and depression symptoms over time. According to a prospective cohort study that tracked a sizable sample of women for ten years, those who followed a healthy eating pattern were less likely to experience depressive symptoms than those who didn't. Similarly, a long-term study showed that middle-aged women who improved their nutrition over time had a lower chance of developing depressive symptoms. Additionally, nutritional therapies have been tested for their ability to reduce depression symptoms in middle-aged women through Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs). A historic study demonstrated that a Mediterranean-style food intervention significantly improved mood scores in a sample of middle-aged women with depressive symptoms as compared to the control group that received only social support. These data demonstrate the possible therapeutic advantages of implementing healthy eating habits in middle-aged women's depression management [4].

Emerging research has also examined the effects of particular nutrients and dietary components on depression symptoms in middle-aged women, in addition to conventional dietary patterns. For example, research has looked into how antioxidants, vitamin D, folate, and omega-3 fatty acids affect mood and cognitive performance. Despite conflicting results, mounting data indicates that improving nutrient intake by dietary changes or supplements may provide supplemental advantages in the treatment of depression in middle-aged women. Healthy eating habits are protective against depression, but unhealthy eating patterns are linked to increased risk. Overall, the research shows a robust correlation between middle-aged women's dietary patterns and depressed symptoms. To clarify the underlying mechanisms, pinpoint the precise dietary elements that offer the biggest advantages, and create specialized dietary interventions for this population, more study is necessary. Healthcare providers can significantly contribute to the promotion of mental health and the improvement of outcomes for middle-aged women suffering from depression by incorporating nutritional considerations into preventive and therapeutic measures [5].

Description

A complicated interaction between a number of variables, including nutritional intake, physiological functions, and psychological elements, determines the association between middle-aged women's eating habits and depressive symptoms. Understanding how nutrition affects mental health outcomes requires assessing both positive and negative correlations. Essential nutrients and bioactive substances that assist mood regulation and brain function are found in healthy dietary patterns that are high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats. Adopting such food patterns may help middle-aged women avoid depressive symptoms while also enhancing their mental health and ability to handle stress. On the other hand, unfavourable eating habits that include consuming a lot of processed foods, sugary drinks, and unhealthy fats may cause or exacerbate depression symptoms.

These diets are frequently connected to chronic inflammation, obesity, and metabolic dysfunction all of which are linked to a higher risk of depression in middle-aged women. The association between food patterns and depression symptoms is significantly influenced by psychosocial factors, including stress levels, social support, and socioeconomic position, in addition to nutritional considerations. By addressing these characteristics in addition to dietary interventions, middle-aged women's depression prevention and treatment programs may be more successful. All things considered, encouraging

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wholesome eating habits and discouraging unhealthy ones could be a significant strategy for lowering the prevalence of depression in middle-aged women. To clarify the mechanisms behind these correlations and provide specialized dietary interventions that maximize mental health outcomes in this population, more study is required.

Conclusion

Healthy eating habits provide protective effects, whereas less favourable dietary patterns pose higher risks in the complex link between middle-aged women's dietary patterns and depression symptoms. Women can promote their mental health and lessen the burden of depression by eating a diet high in fruits, vegetables, healthy grains, and lean proteins and reducing their intake of processed foods and sugary drinks. Future studies should concentrate on clarifying the fundamental processes that connect nutrition and depression, identifying susceptible groups, and creating focused interventions to support middle-aged women's mental health. We can promote holistic approaches to wellbeing and enable women to live happy, fulfilled lives free from the hold of depression by addressing nutritional variables in addition to conventional methods of mental health care.

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest by author.

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