SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES AND CANCER RISK

The excessive consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is a potential risk factor for many diseases, including cancer. One of the Louisiana State University studies has found further evidence of this link.

These type of beverages which contain added sugars such as sucrose or fructose, often in large quantities, contribute to the diet energy intake; however, the calories provided by sugar-sweetened beverages have a lower nutritional value and do not help to achieve a similar sense of satiety as solid foods. That's why their regular consumption or consumption in excessive quantities may contribute to weight gain and obesity. According to WHO, the ideal amount of sugar in the diet should be less than 10% of total energy.
A study conducted by researchers from the Louisiana State University Health Science Center in New Orleans and published in the journal Translational Cancer Research explored the link between consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and cancer. They examined clinical data from 22,182 adult individuals collected between 2003 and 2012 as part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES): in particular, they have observed certain habits, including the consumption of sodas, fruit-flavored drinks, sweetened fruit juices, energy drinks for athletes, soft drinks, coffee and sugar-sweetened teas. The behavioral data were crossed with other individual information, including smoking habits, weight, demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, education and income) and the patient's clinical history.

15.7% of this broad cross-section consumed large quantities of sugar-sweetened drinks and foods (more than 80 grams of sugar per day), and it was mainly composed of young men, African-Americans, the obese, smokers, those with a low level of education and with low income. Individuals with no cancer history consumed higher amounts of sugar than the group of people who have survived cancer.
According to the researchers, the most contingent problem emerged from this data was the lack of education on diet: people are not aware of the amount of sugar that they consume every day, especially of the excessive amounts contained in sugar-sweetened beverages. The American Heart Association, for example, suggests not to exceed the daily 450 kilocalories derived from sugar.

Melinda Sothern, co-author of this study and a University professor, emphasized that "the objective of this study was to closely evaluate the risk factors of sugar consumption from sugar-sweetened beverages among cancer survivors and people not diagnosed with cancer, and to our knowledge, no other studies have examined sugar-sweetened beverage intake in cancer survivors",

"Recently growing evidence suggests a link between sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and the risk of pancreatic and endometrial cancer, as well as the risk of colon cancer recurrence and death among cancer survivors", added Doctor Sothern.

This study shows an even more significant way that we must promote healthy lifestyles, and limit the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, not only among people with a cancer history but also among healthy individuals.

References

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PHSI/ZYT/0817/0002