

Meat Consumers: Psychology of Dietary Patterns and Proteins

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Abstract

Meat consumption is firmly ingrained in Western society. It is frequently linked with affluence and a well-balanced diet, and for many individuals, it is also an established habit that is difficult to break. The second part of the twentieth century saw a significant increase in meat consumption, which resulted in increased meat production. Simultaneously, consuming meat has recently come under fire for health, environmental, and humanitarian grounds. This review seeks to highlight the possible effects of a diet change or switching to diets rich/poor in certain components on the functioning of the hormonal and neurological systems, which results in changes in mood and behavior. This study addresses the psychological factors that underpin the difficulty of altering one's food choices, as well as the difficulties experienced when incorporating new items into one's regular diet. Finally, this study outlines the limits of changing eating patterns as a result of pre-existing attitudes and behaviors.

Keywords: Meat; Protein; Amino acids; Phytoestrogens; Food neophobia

Introduction

Since prehistoric times, people have subsisted on the flesh of creatures that lived in their surroundings. There is reason to believe that the desire to consume meat played a key role in determining the last phases of human development. The twentieth century saw an especially significant growth in meat consumption, as a result of economic growth, advancements in meat production technologies, and more urbanization. A meat-based diet became a symbol of prosperity, and meat eating was seen to be the greatest method to meet one's nutritional demands. It appears reasonable to assert that extensive animal-based production in response to rising demand for meat and animal-based goods adds to environmental devastation and has a substantial role in climate change. The issue of limiting meat intake extends beyond the question of maintaining a balanced diet and addressing possible shortages in vital components. Furthermore, many individuals have a very positive attitude toward eating meat—they appreciate and gain pleasure from it.

Information programmers intended at increasing public knowledge of the detrimental effects of meat eating on the

environment, animal welfare, and human health elicit psychological defense mechanisms and fail to reduce meat consumption in the general population. This occurs despite the fact that adopting a vegetarian diet is now often considered as a highly praiseworthy activity that speaks well of the individual who has made the decision to do so.

Protein

Proteins are the high level of biomolecules which are made up of one or more long chains of amino acid residues. Proteins catalyze metabolic activities, replicate DNA, respond to stimuli, provide shape to cells and animals, and transport chemicals. Proteins differ largely in their amino acid sequence, which is controlled by the nucleotide sequence of their genes and generally culminates in protein folding into a particular 3D structure that defines its function. It should be emphasized, however, that this study only provides one particular example and may not be replicated in other patients. Furthermore, animal-based diet is crucial for undernourished children's growth, recuperation rate, and cognitive capacities. The use of meat in school lunches was also advocated as a treatment for nutritional deficiencies in underdeveloped nations. Meat eating in human children was found to be associated to cognitive and scholastic performance in population studies.

Amino Acids

Amino acids are chemical molecules that include amino and carboxyl functional groups, as well as a particular side chain (R group) for each amino acid. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen are the four essential components of an amino acid; however additional elements can be present in the side chains of certain amino acids. As of 1983, there were around 500 naturally occurring amino acids known (albeit only 20 were found in the genetic code) and they may be categorised in a variety of ways. The pace at which amino acids enter the neurons that produce serotonin determines how quickly they are converted into neurotransmitters.

Amino acid supplementation, either directly or through food, increases the quantity of tryptophan that enters neurons, resulting in a surge in serotonin synthesis. Such interventions result in observable alterations in brain function and, as a result, behaviour. For example, tryptophan supplementation can alter sleep and mood by stimulating serotonin synthesis and release.

Phytoestrogens

Eliminating or drastically lowering the quantity of meat in the diet necessitates the substitution of plant protein for animal protein. However, this diet is notably high in phytoestrogens, which have an effect on the human body. More long-term population studies are needed to investigate the effect of isoflavone overexposure in early infancy. This is crucial because newborns are more vulnerable to hormone disturbances than adults.

Food Neophobia

The dread of anything new, especially a persistent and excessive fear, is known as Neophobia. In its milder version, it might show as a reluctance to attempt new things or deviate from routine. In the context of children, the phrase typically refers to a proclivity to reject unfamiliar or unusual meals. Food neophobia, as it is sometimes called, is a major problem in paediatric psychology. Neophobia is frequently connected with the study of taste in biomedical research.

Conclusion

It is not easy to persuade people to make dietary adjustments. The emphasis put on the need to modify dietary choices in large populations and reduce meat consumption, on the other hand, cannot be based simply on rational arguments provided to the general public by doctors or scientists. Despite substantial scientific data and medical advice, there are several psychological processes that make even minor dietary modifications difficult to execute. This is arguably most clearly shown that persons suffering from health problems such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease are frequently hesitant to make dietary adjustments that may help them properly control their symptoms and, in some cases, significantly lengthen their lives.