

Mediterranean diet improves immunotherapy response rates and progression-free survival in advanced melanoma

October 10 2022



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Eating a Mediterranean diet rich in fiber, mono-unsaturated fatty acids and polyphenols, has been associated with improved immunotherapy response rates and progression-free survival in advanced melanoma patients, a new study presented today at UEG Week 2022 has found.

Experts anticipate that the diet will play an important role in the success of immunotherapy and trials are being expanded to investigate outcomes for different tumor types, including digestive cancers.

A Mediterranean diet, containing mono- and [polyunsaturated fats](#) from olive oil, nuts and fish, polyphenols and fiber from vegetables, fruit, and wholegrains, was significantly associated with an improved response to immunotherapy drugs called Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors (ICIs). ICIs, which have been highly successful in treating melanoma, work by blocking immune system checkpoints, which then force the body's own T-cells to attack cancers.

The new multi-center study by researchers from the U.K. and the Netherlands, recorded the [dietary intake](#) of 91 patients with advanced melanoma, who were treated with ICI drugs and monitored their progress with regular radiographic response check-ups.

As well as having a significant association with overall response rate, a Mediterranean diet was significantly associated with [progression-free survival](#) at 12 months.

Laura Bolte, author of the study and Ph.D. candidate under supervision of Prof. Rinse Weersma from the University Medical Center Groningen, Netherlands, commented, "ICI has helped to revolutionize the treatment of different types of advanced cancers. Our study underlines the importance of dietary assessment in [cancer patients](#) starting ICI treatment and supports a role for dietary strategies to improve patient outcomes and survival."

The study also found that eating wholegrains and legumes reduced the likelihood of developing drug induced immune-related side effects, such as colitis. In contrast, red and processed meat was associated with a higher probability of immune-related side effects.

"The relationship of ICI response with diet and the gut microbiome opens a promising and exciting future to enhance treatment responses. Clinical trials investigating the effect of a high fiber diet, ketogenic diet and supplementation of omega-3 are underway. Since ICI therapy is being expanded to various tumor types, including [digestive cancers](#), these studies could unlock treatment benefits for a large group of cancer patients in the future," added Laura Bolte.

More information: Bolte L, et al. Dietary Intake Influences the Response to Cancer Immunotherapy. Presented at UEG Week 2022; 9 October 2022; Vienna, Austria.

Provided by United European Gastroenterology

Citation: Mediterranean diet improves immunotherapy response rates and progression-free survival in advanced melanoma (2022, October 10) retrieved 23 March 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-10-mediterranean-diet-immunotherapy-response-progression-free.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.