Eating bran helps reduce mortality and heart risk for diabetic women

By ACSH Staff — October 25, 2010

If one in three Americans really will be diabetic in 40 years, perhaps it’s time to start hoarding cereals with bran. A different group of researchers have found that women with type 2 diabetes can reduce their risk of premature death and cardiovascular diseases (CVD) by eating bran supplemented foods such as rice, corn, oats, barley, millet and wheat. Researchers followed 7,822 women with type 2 diabetes enrolled in the Nurse’s Health Study for 26 years, dividing them into five groups based on their intake of whole grain, cereal fiber, bran and germ. They found that after adjusting for age and other dietary and lifestyle factors, only bran consumption was correlated with a 28 percent reduced risk of death from all causes in women with the highest bran intake. Those women in the highest bran intake group also demonstrated a 45 percent reduction in the risk of heart disease, stroke or CVD.

While we have a problem with some of the study data, including the use of dietary recall, the reduction in the risk of death and CVD is substantial in this fairly large study, notes ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross.

Led by Dr. Meian He, Ph.D., and colleagues from the Harvard School of Public Health, the researchers conclude that whole-grain and bran intakes were associated with reduced all-cause and CVD-specific mortality in women with diabetes mellitus. These findings suggest a potential benefit of whole-grain intake in reducing mortality and cardiovascular risk in diabetic patients.