

Peanuts linked to lower death rates from heart disease, according to large study

By ACSH Staff — March 10, 2015



Eating peanuts (which are actually legumes) was associated with

a lower risk for cardiovascular disease and death, according [new large study](#) ^[1] published online in *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Earlier studies have linked high intake of nuts to reduced risk of mortality, however, most previous studies were conducted among people of European descent and high socioeconomic status.

Dr. Xiao-Ou Shu, MD, PhD, of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, and coauthors set out to examine the association of nut intake with total and cause-specific mortality in Americans of African and European descent who were predominantly of low socioeconomic status (SES) and Chinese individuals living in Shanghai, China. Over 71,000 Americans and over 134,000 individuals living in Shanghai were included in the study. Nut intake was self-reported using well-validated food frequency questionnaires. In the US group, about 50 percent of the nut/peanut consumption was peanuts, and in the Chinese group, only peanut consumption was assessed.

The participants were followed for a median 5.4 years in the American group, a median of 6.5 years in the Shanghai men's group, and a median of 12.2 years in the Shanghai women's group. More than two dozen other health variables including smoking and alcohol consumption were controlled for.

In all groups, it was found that nut intake was associated with reduced risk of total mortality and cardiovascular disease (CVD). In the US study group, there was a reduced risk of total mortality of 21 percent for participants with the highest peanut intake compared with those in the lowest one-fifth for nut consumption. In the Chinese study groups, the reduced risk of total mortality was 17 percent. There was also a similar association for ischemic heart disease in all groups.

The authors conclude, Nut consumption was associated with decreased overall and cardiovascular disease mortality across different ethnic groups and among individuals from low SES groups. Consumption of nuts, particularly peanuts given their general affordability, may be considered a cost-effective measure to improve cardiovascular health. However, senior author Dr. Xiao-Ou Shu [notes](#) [2], This is an observational study and there could be confounding factors.

ACSH s Dr. Gil Ross had this comment: The finding of 21 percent or 17 percent on a lengthy observational study with many possible confounders and dependent on dietary recall is fraught for anyone trying to draw a solid conclusion. Be that as it may, other studies have supported the overall benefits of tree-nuts and peanuts as part of a healthy diet.

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Links

[1] <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2173094>

[2] <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/04/peanuts-may-be-good-for-your-heart/>