EPHE 155 Weight Loss Plan or Nutritional Supplement Critique

For Example Use ONLY

While low carbohydrate high protein/fat diets have diminished in popularity since the 90's one 'low carb' diet that has been making a resurgence is the paleolithic diet, or paleo diet for short. The paleo diet simply put is explained as getting back in touch with what our hunter-gatherer ancestors would have ingested since some propose that evolutionarily speaking our post sedentary selves and pre sedentary ancestors have not changed much in overall genetic adaptation. The paleo diet claims to aid in weight loss, increase insulin sensitivity, and therefore prevention of type 2 diabetes as well as many other modern diseases attributed to affluence, and excess. In patients with heart disease, a Paleo diet produced greater improvement in glucose tolerance and greater decreases weight than the Mediterranean diet Lindeberg et al. (2007). In one study with healthy volunteers, a Paleolithic diet produced statistically significant decreases in weight, and blood pressure over a 3-week period compared with subjects consuming a normal American diet (Osterdahl, Kockturk, Koochek & Wandell, 2007). One major red flag are the large number of nutrient and calorically rich foods that are prohibited: legumes like peanuts, beans and lentils, grains like quinoa, and tubers like yams and sweet potatoes. While the results of the various studies on the effects of the paleo diet appear promising, it is important to note subtle caveats in each experiement. In both Osterdahl, Kockturk, Koochek and Wandell (2007) and Frassetto, Schloetter, Mietus, Morris and Sebastian (2009), the paleo diet was compared to either the normal American diet, or the regular diet for the subject respectively. While both papers show the health benefits of the paleo diet compared to its alternative, the alternative has been shown to be detrimental on numerous occasions. While Lindberg et al. (2007) showed improved glucose tolerance due to the paleo diet compared to the Mediterranean diet, Jonsson et al. (2010) showed that a decreased caloric intake was required of the Paleo diet group in order to

stimulate the same level of satiety of the Mediterranean diet group. This decreased caloric intake could also have had an effect on the greater benefits of the paleo diet. While all these findings go to support the health benefits of the Paleolithic diet, it is important to note that no studies could be found directly testing the efficacy of the diet in athletes, or highly active individuals. As far as the weight loss aspect of low carbohydrate/high protein diets compared to the Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range (AMDR), the long term losses have been shown not to be significantly greater either way. Based on the exclusion of tubers, legumes and certain grains, as well as the reduced carbohydrate intake I would not directly recommend the use of the paleo diet as either a weight loss diet, or an overall diet choice. That being said, including the aforementioned choices, coupled with the amount of vegetables, lean meats and healthy fats, a modified Paleolithic diet could still have the health benefits without the shortcomings.

References

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