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30 March 2012

**Slow food, better mood**

by Will Parker

"The more fast food you consume, the greater the risk of depression," say Spanish researchers who have linked the consumption of hamburgers, hotdogs and pizza to a significantly greater likelihood of developing depression.

The results, published in the journal *Public Health Nutrition*, reveal that consumers of fast food, compared to those who eat little or none, are 51 percent more likely to develop depression. The researchers, from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and the University of Granada, tracked 8,964 participants who had never been diagnosed with depression or taken antidepressants. The subjects were assessed for an average of six months, and during that period 493 were diagnosed with depression or began taking antidepressants.



Despite the absence of evidence of a causative relationship, study leader Almudena Sánchez-Villegas says consumers should take note that diet and mental health are tightly linked. "Although more studies are necessary, the intake of this type of food should be controlled because of its implications on both health [obesity, cardiovascular diseases] and mental well-being," he suggests. "Even eating small quantities is linked to a significantly higher chance of developing depression."

While little is known about the role that diet plays in developing depressive disorders, previous studies have suggested that certain nutrients play a preventative role. These include group B vitamins and omega-3 fatty acids.

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