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Diet quality and anxiety during the Coronavirus disease pandemic: by-sex differences**Prof. Mona Boaz***Ariel University, Ariel, Israel*

The COVID-19 pandemic has been characterized by increased anxiety. Associations between anxiety and diet quality have been identified. Herein, we examine whether these associations differ by sex. This cross-sectional, international online study was conducted March 30-April 25, 2020. The survey was conducted on a Google Survey platform, the link to which was posted on social media platforms. Included were adults aged 18 or older who saw and responded to the link on a social media site. Diet quality was defined as the Mediterranean score, while anxiety was measured using the General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) score. Of the 3979 eligible respondents, 2854 (75.2%) were female. Mean respondent age was 35.1±13.3 years and did not differ by sex. Mediterranean diet score was 8.8±2.4 in women and 8.7±2.5, $p=0.35$. Women had significantly greater anxiety scores than men: 7.1±5.8 vs. 4.9±5.2, $p<0.001$. Similarly, 58.9% of women compared to 40.6% of men, $p<0.001$, reported at least mild anxiety (a GAD-7 score ≥ 5). A significant, inverse association between Mediterranean diet score and anxiety was detected in women ($r=-0.187$, $p<0.001$) and men ($r=-0.167$, $p<0.001$) and did not differ by sex. In a multivariate logistic regression, being male (OR 0.46, 95% CI 0.40-0.54, $p<0.001$) and Mediterranean diet score (OR 0.89, 95% CI 0.87-0.92, $p<0.001$) significantly reduced odds of at least mild anxiety. The present study demonstrates associations between diet quality, sex and anxiety levels. While reported anxiety was significantly lower in men, diet quality was similar and associations between diet quality and anxiety were consistent by sex.

Biography

Prof. Mona Boaz is the director of the Graduate Studies program in the Department of Nutrition Sciences, Ariel University, Israel. An epidemiologist and a nutritionist, she has published more than 200 scientific papers and serves on the editorial boards of three esteemed journals.