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The key role of nutritional treatments in the management of metabolic syndrome

Torchia G

Nutripanda Clinic Organization, UK

Central obesity, impaired glucose tolerance, insulin resistance, dyslipidaemia and hypertension are some of the risk factors included in the metabolic syndrome that predisposes individuals to the development of type 2 diabetes (T2DM), cardiovascular disease (CVD) and increased risk of mortality. A significant portion of individuals worldwide are affected with metabolic syndrome, reaching epidemic proportions. Indeed, according to recent worldwide figures, 55 million people in Europe and approximately 27 million Americans are affected with diabetes and more than 600 million people out of 1.9 billion overweight adults are obese (2). Moreover, it has been estimated that 35-40% of US adults aged over 20 are sufferers of metabolic syndrome (1). The prevalence of metabolic syndrome is high and rapidly increasing in many western societies (5). Genetic factors, insulin resistance, physical activity, obesity, and poor nutrition such as a high intake of alcohol, salt, saturated trans- fatty acids and refined carbohydrates can all contribute to the pathogenesis of metabolic syndrome. A high adherence to a Mediterranean diet had a 22% reduced risk of developing metabolic syndrome, while The Dietary Approach to Stopping Hypertension (DASH) diet was successful in improving most of the elements of metabolic syndrome, including lowering glucose and triglycerides, as well as systolic and diastolic blood pressure (3, 4). Our nutritional collective case study of randomly selected patients affected by metabolic syndrome considers the interplay of a low glycemic load diet, DASH diet and a Mediterranean-style diet, confirming the beneficial effects of increasing HDL and reducing obesity, hyperglycemia, systolic blood pressure, LDL and triglycerides, as a novel therapeutic approach for tackling metabolic syndrome.

g.torchia@nutripanda.com