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Dietary intake, food sources and potential determinants of vitamin C in Chinese adults

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Vitamin C is essential for human health. However, dietary vitamin C intake in Chinese population has changed with nutritional transition in recent decades and needs to be estimated. Present study used data of “China Nutritional Transition Cohort Study” in 2015 and selected those aged 18-65 years with completed data of socio-demographic characteristics, anthropometry and dietary measurements as subjects. We analyzed daily dietary vitamin C intake and food sources across demographic factors, evaluated the prevalence of vitamin C deficiency using the estimated average requirement cut-off point, and explored underlying influencing factors. Mean and median levels of dietary vitamin C intake in adults were 78.1 and 65.4 mg/day, respectively. Prevalence of vitamin C deficiency in study population and proportion of subjects with lower probability of vitamin C inadequacy were 65.1% and 25.9%, respectively. Both the distribution of vitamin C intake and the prevalence of vitamin C deficiency differed by gender, educational level, residence area, geographic location, smoking, alcohol intake and vegetable consumption frequency. Moreover, gender, educational level, residence area, geographic location and vegetable consumptions were found to be independent determinants for vitamin C deficiency. Top four food sources of vitamin C in adults were light vegetables, dark vegetables, fruits and tubers, totally contributing 97.3% to total vitamin C. In conclusion, dietary vitamin C deficiency is severe in Chinese adults. Vitamin C intake on a recommended basis in Chinese population is required, especially women and population living in town and rural regions.

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