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Ecological relationship between fish and sugar/sweetener supply and mental disorders

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Background: The paper examines the ecological association of dietary trends with mental health outcomes on national level.

Methods: Published data from the World Mental Health Survey were used to compare lifetime prevalence of four categories of mental health disorders (anxiety disorders, mood disorders, impulse control disorders and substance use disorders) against a country's fish and sugar/sweetener supply using Spearman's rank correlation. Data were compared for seventeen countries across the world.

Results: Sugar and sweetener supply was significantly and positively associated with anxiety ($\rho=0.75$, $p=0.001$), mood ($\rho=0.75$, $p=0.001$), impulse control ($\rho=0.78$, $p=0.001$) and substance use ($\rho=0.68$, $p=0.007$) disorders. Fish supply had no significant association with any mental health disorders.

Conclusions: Mental health disorders represent a significant health problem around the world. Public health measures aimed at improving the quality and availability of a nation's food supply could have a significant impact on mental health. Further randomized studies may be needed to validate the findings of this correlational study.

Biography

Jordan Hoerr is currently a Medical Student at University of Illinois at Chicago. He has graduated from Wabash College with a BA majoring in Chemistry with a double social science minor of Psychology and Economics.

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