

Dietary Patterns and Chronic Disease

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I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

U.S. Dietary Guidelines: A dietary pattern is the combination of foods and beverages that constitutes an individual's complete dietary intake over time. This may be a description of a customary way of eating or a description of a combination of foods recommended for consumption.

Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits.

Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.

Core elements of dietary patterns

- Vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables
- Fruits, especially whole fruit
- Grains, at least half of which are whole grain
- Dairy, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages and yogurt as alternatives
- Protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, & soy products
- Oils, including vegetable oils and oils in food, such as seafood and nuts

Three main approaches to dietary patterns:

Indices or scores based on prior knowledge (A priori)

Empirically derived from dietary data of the study population (e.g., principal components analysis)

Hypothesis oriented (e.g., insulinemia, inflammation)

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Summary of index components that are common across most of the dietary indices

Index components	HEI-2010	AHEI-2010	DASH	Typical MED	WCRF/ AICR	Rec. Food Score
Higher intake rewarded						
Fruits	+	+	+	+	+	+
Vegetables	+	+	+	+	+	+
Nuts or legumes	+	+	+	+	+	+
Whole grains	+	+	+	+	+	+
Low-fat dairy products	+		+	+	+	+
Fish and other seafood				+	+	+
Lower/no intake rewarded						
Red or processed meat	+	+	+	+	+	
Sugared beverages	+	+	+		+	
Alcoholic beverages	+	m		m	+	
Table salt	+	+	+		+	

Dietary indices/scores based on prior knowledge

- **There is a lot of overlap among dietary patterns**
- **They vary how they treat certain items like alcohol, salt, dairy, animal proteins other than red meat**
- **Their correlations are ~ 0.6 to 0.7.**
- **Most are focused on CVD risk reduction (e.g., lipids, sugars, blood pressure: DASH, Healthy Eating Index, Mediterranean)**

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Other vegetables
 Leafy vegetables
 Cruciferous vegetables
 Yellow vegetables
 Fruit
 Fish
 Legumes Tomatoes
 Poultry
 Garlic Salad dressing
 Whole grains



Table 1. Factor Loading Matrix for Dietary Patterns From Food Frequency Questionnaire*

Foods	Prudent				Western			
	1984	1986	1990	1994	1984	1986	1990	1994
Other vegetables	0.68	0.73	0.68	0.69	...	...	...	...
Leafy vegetables	0.63	0.66	0.65	0.58	...	...	...	...
Cruciferous	0.61	0.59	0.61	0.63	...	...	...	...
Yellow vegetables	0.60	0.62	0.65	0.67	...	...	...	...
Fruit	0.60	0.58	0.58	0.62	...	...	...	...
Fish	0.50	0.53	0.51	0.43	...	...	...	...
Legumes	0.55	0.51	0.57	0.61	0.18	0.20	0.15	0.15
Tomatoes	0.45	0.56	0.49	0.43	0.17	0.16	0.16	...
Poultry	0.43	0.42	0.42	0.31	...	...	...	...
Garlic	0.35	NA	NA	0.24	...	NA	NA	...
Salad dressings	0.43	0.40	0.34	0.22	...	...	...	...
Whole grains	0.41	0.38	0.41	0.43	...	...	...	...
Organ meats	0.23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Refined grains	...	...	...	...	0.74	0.57	0.52	0.44
Processed meats	...	...	...	...	0.52	0.57	0.58	0.57
Red meat	...	...	...	...	0.56	0.56	0.60	0.61
French fries	-0.15	...	...	...	0.44	0.48	0.46	0.47
Condiments	...	0.17	...	...	0.40	0.33	0.36	0.28
Desserts and sweets	...	...	...	...	0.60	0.49	0.45	0.45
Potatoes	...	...	0.21	0.26	0.39	0.38	0.34	0.34
High fat dairy	...	...	...	...	0.35	0.40	0.46	0.43
Pizza	...	...	...	...	0.36	0.34	0.36	0.33
Sugar beverages	...	...	...	...	0.32	0.34	0.33	0.34
Margarine	...	...	...	...	0.30	0.30	0.32	0.34
Eggs	...	...	...	...	0.25	0.32	0.41	0.42
Snacks	...	...	...	...	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.33
Butter	...	...	...	...	0.23	0.25	0.29	0.27
Cream soups	...	0.15	...	...	0.21	0.30	0.31	0.35
Tea	...	...	...	...	0.15	0.17	...	...
Cereal	...	...	...	0.23	...	...	...	...
Low-fat dairy	0.16	0.30	0.32	0.36	...	...	...	-0.15
Fruit juices	...	0.24	0.21	0.26	...	...	...	0.15
Nuts	0.19	0.21	0.17	...	0.18	0.22	0.23	0.28
Diet beverages	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Coffee	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Water	NA	NA	0.32	0.35	NA	NA	...	...
Mayonnaise	0.17	0.20	...	...	0.31	0.33	0.34	0.27
Olive oil	NA	NA	0.31	0.19	NA	NA	...	...
Other soups	NA	0.27	NA	NA	NA	0.28	NA	NA
Liquor	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Beer	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wine	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Abbreviation: NA, data not available.
 *Ellipses indicate factor loadings less than ± 0.15 were omitted for simplicity.



Refined grains
 Red meat
 Processed meat
 French fries
 Condiments
 Desserts and sweets
 Potatoes
 High Fat dairy
 Pizza
 Sugar beverages
 Margarine
 Eggs
 Snacks
 Butter
 Cream soups

Principal components analysis in the Nurses' Health Study

Summary of major food groups common in most Principal Components Analysis (PCA)-derived dietary patterns across the world

Food components in dietary patterns derived using PCA	United States	Canada	Argentina	Uruguay	European countries	Sweden	South Korea	Japan	Jordan	Iran
“Healthy” dietary pattern										
Fruits	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Vegetables	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Nuts and legumes	+			+	+			+	+	
Whole grains	+	+				+				
Milk dairy & other dairy			+	+		+	+	+	+	+
Fish and poultry	+			+	+	+				+
“Unhealthy” dietary pattern										
Red and processed meat	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Sugar-sweetened beverages	+		+		+	+	+			+
Refined grains and desserts	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+
Potatoes	+		+		+	+			+	

There is reasonable concordance in derived dietary patterns across diverse countries (though broader studies are required). In most populations, an “unhealthy” (western) and “healthy” dietary patterns emerges in the first two components.

Differences could represent real differences in dietary factors (e.g., some items such as sugar sweetened beverages can be consumed variably across countries), differences in the questionnaires, grouping of food items, statistical methodology, etc.

Three main approaches to dietary patterns:

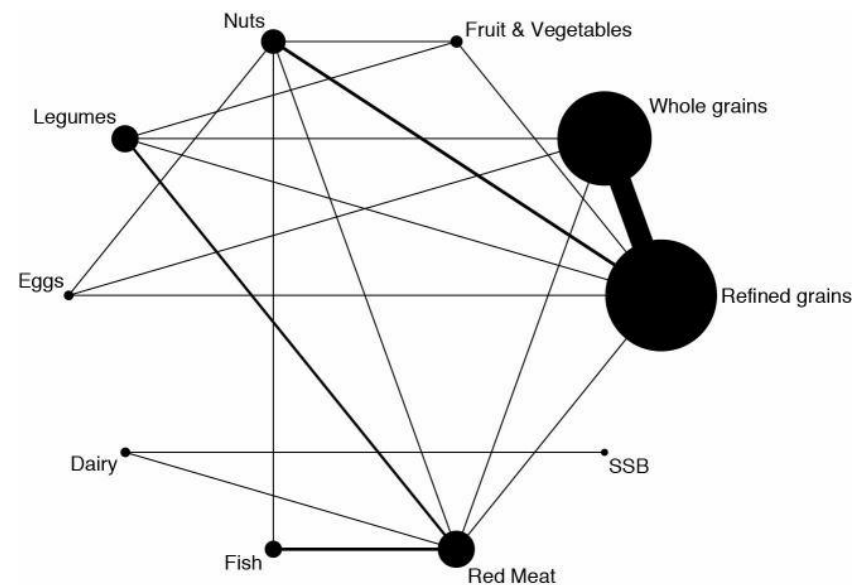
Indices or scores based on prior knowledge (A priori)

Empirically derived from dietary data of the study population (e.g., principal components analysis)

Hypothesis oriented (e.g., insulinemia, inflammation)

Food groups and intermediate disease markers: a systematic review and network meta-analysis of randomized trials

	Summary	LDL-C	TGs	HOMA-IR	CRP
Nuts	1	1	2	3	2
Whole grains	2	3	5	1	3
Legumes	3	2	4	2	6
Fish	4	9	1	5	8
Fruits/vegetables	5	4	7	6	9
Refined grains	6	5	8	4	7
Red meat	7	10	3	-	5
Eggs	8	6	10	8	1
Dairy	9	7	6	7	4
Sugar Beverages	10	8	9	-	-



66 randomized trials comparing 10
food groups and enrolling 3595
participants

Schwingshackl et al AJCN 2018

Empirically determined foods that predict hyperinsulinemia and systemic inflammation (NHS, NHS2, HPFS, WHI)

Dietary prediction models of biomarkers:

- C-peptide (insulin secretion)
- inflammation (CRP, IL-6, TNF-alphaR2)

Foods and food groups entered the regression models in an unbiased manner

Many common items predicted the 2 biomarkers
(18 individual items overall for each biomarker)

	Pro- Insulinemic	Pro- Inflammatory
Red Meat	+	+
Processed Meat	+	+
Starchy Vegetables	+	+
Refined vs Whole Grains	+	+
Sugar-Sweetened Beverages	+	+
Coffee	-	-
Alcohol (moderate)	-	-
Vegetables (Non-Starchy; green)	-	-
Fruit / Fruit Juice	-	-
Low-fat dairy	+	
Butter	+	
Eggs	+	
Poultry, non-fatty fish	+	

Relevant publications:

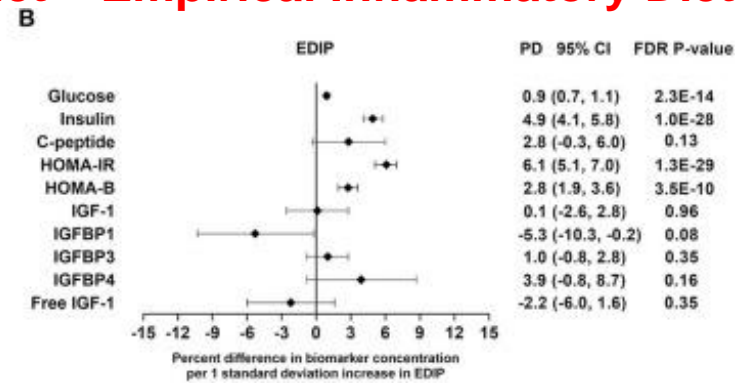
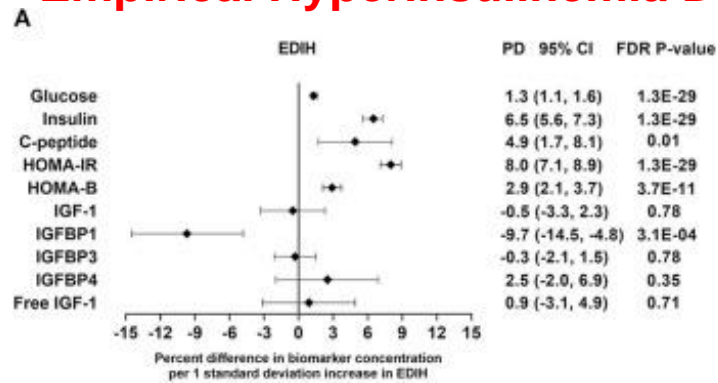
F Tabung et al Br J Nutr 2016
F Tabung et al J Nutrition 2017
F Tabung et al J Nutr 2018



Fred Tabung, post doc at HSPH,
Assistant Professor OSU

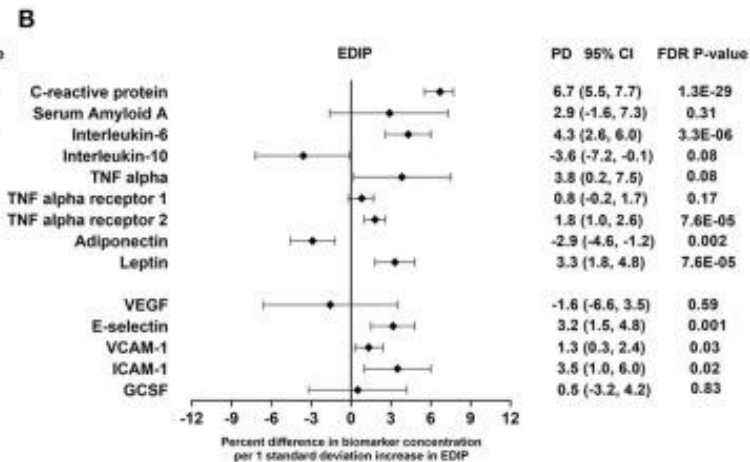
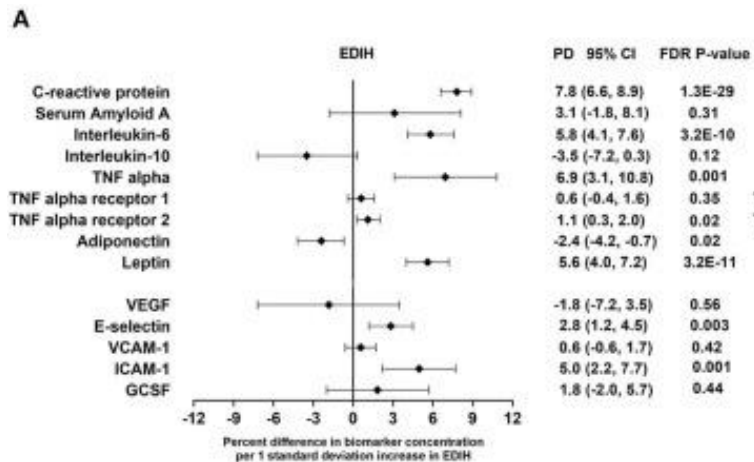
Empirical Hyperinsulinemia Diet

Empirical Inflammatory Diet



Glucose
Insulin
C-peptide
HOMA-IR
HOMA-B
IGFBP-1

Insulin
Glycemia



CRP
TNF-alpha

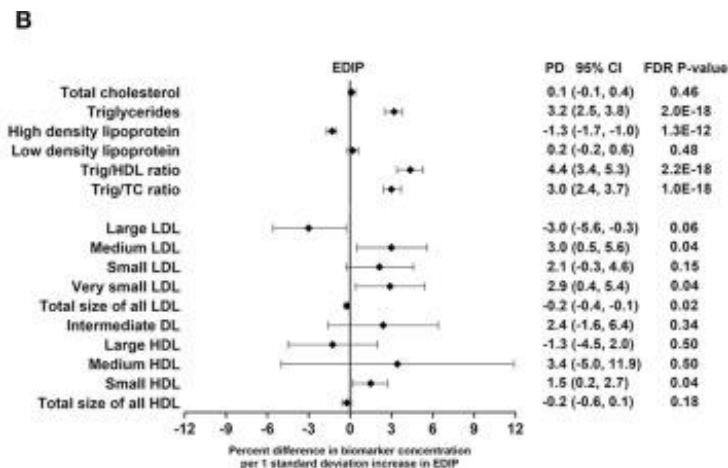
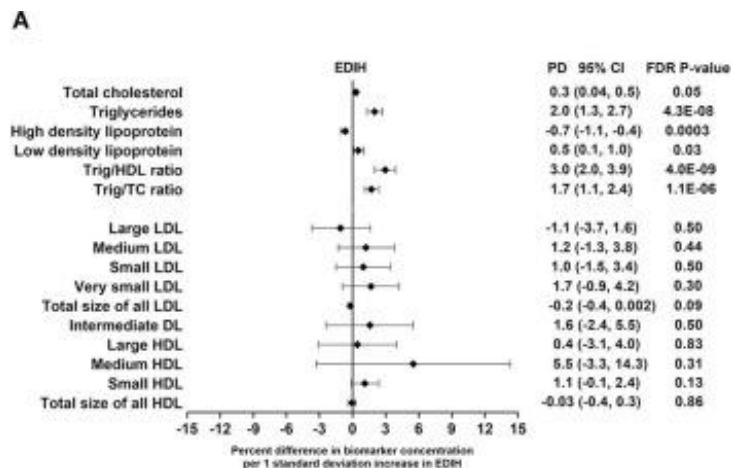
Inflammation

Adiponectin (-)
Leptin

Adipokines

E-selectin
I-CAM-1

Endothelial



Triglycerides
HDL-cholesterol
Triglycerides/HDL ratio
Small/very small LDL

Lipids

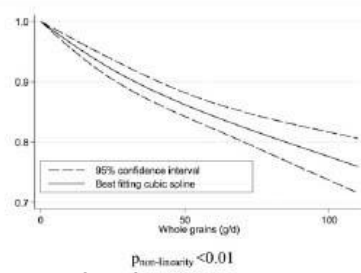
Rationale to study/recommend dietary patterns:

The whole diet would better pick up additive and “synergistic” effects (e.g., many small effects may add up to a substantial one)

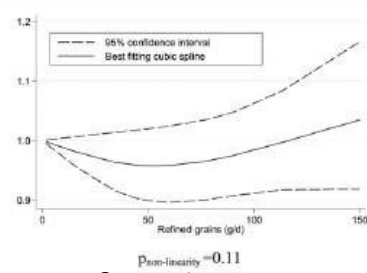
Inherently accounts for substitution (i.e., defines what one eats and does not eat)

Reduces the problem of confounding in nutritional studies

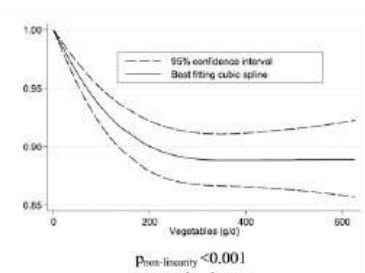
Easier to translate & communicate (people eat foods)



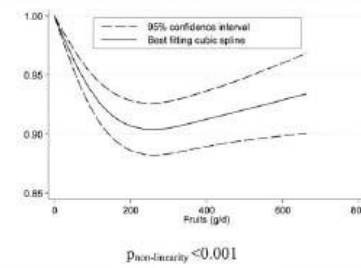
Whole grains



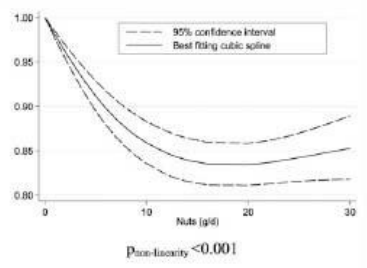
Refined grains



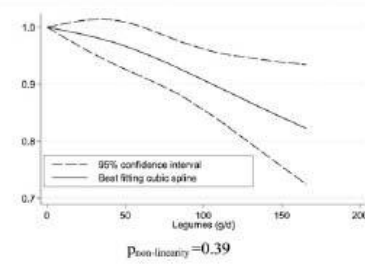
Vegetables



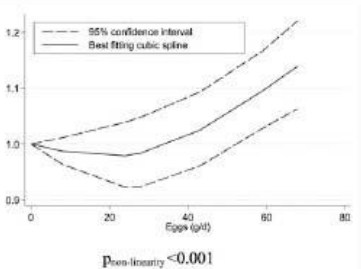
Fruits



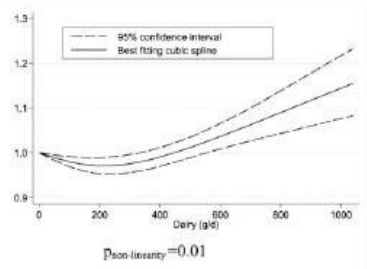
Nuts



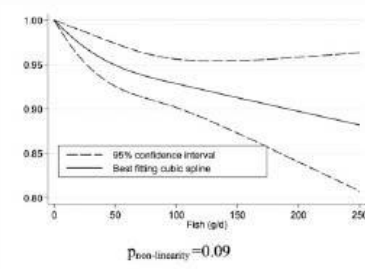
Legumes



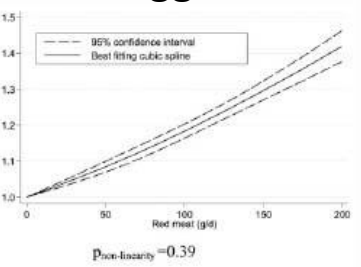
Eggs



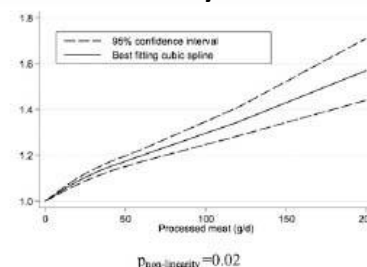
Dairy



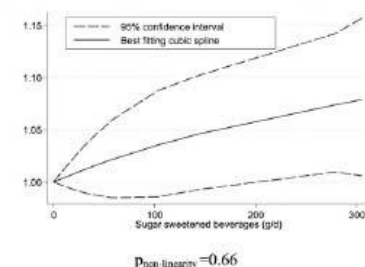
Fish



Red Meat



Processed Meat



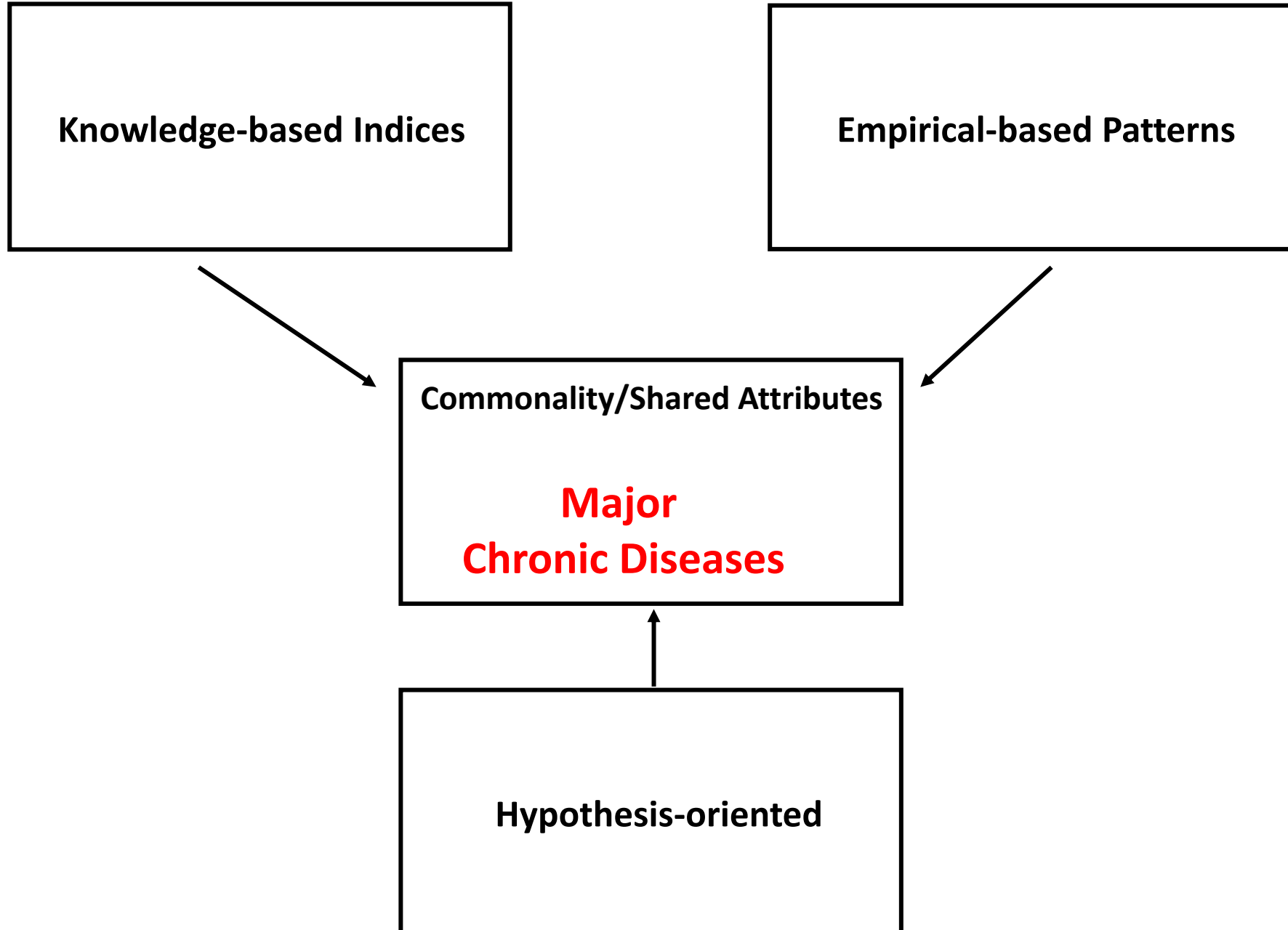
Sugar Sweetened Beverages

Food groups and risk of all-cause mortality: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies

Focus on an individual food item may exaggerate its beneficial effects because it incorporates:

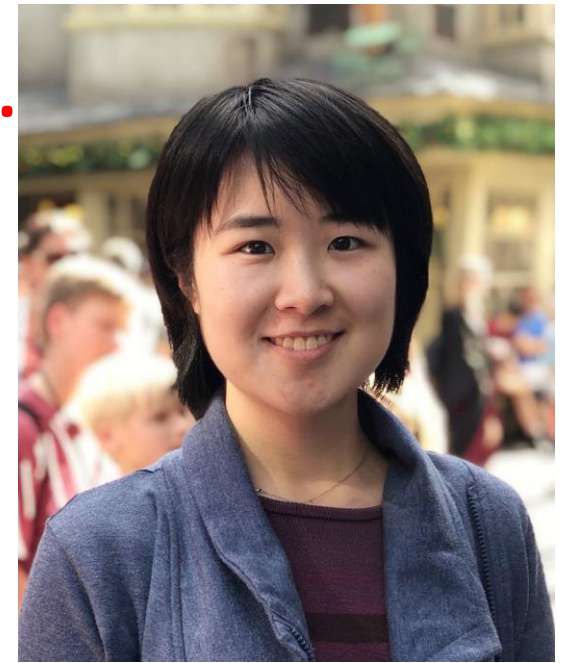
- its direct (“causal”) effect (if there is one)**
- its correlation with other beneficial foods or patterns**
- its displacement of unhealthy foods**

Defining the whole dietary pattern is more likely to provide a realistic effect estimate of a healthy dietary pattern



Optimal dietary patterns for prevention of chronic disease. Nature Medicine 2023, Peilu Wang et al.

To determine the superior dietary patterns for general health by focusing on major chronic disease, defined as the first occurrence of incident major CVD, type 2 diabetes, or total cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer and non-fatal prostate cancer).



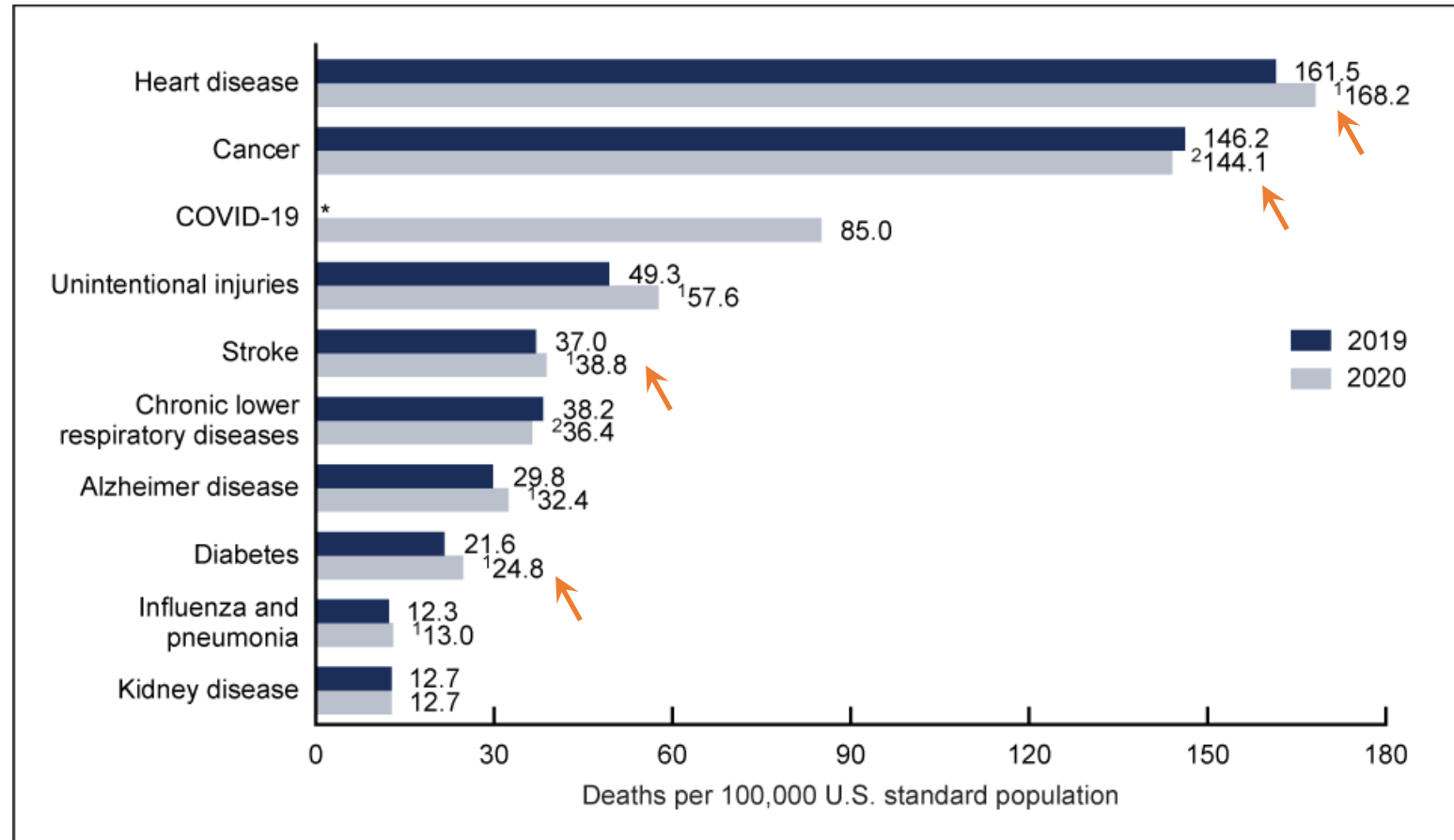
3 cohorts : Nurses Health Study 1 Nurses Health Study 2
Health Professionals Follow-Up Study

~163,000 women and 43,000 men followed up to 32 years with repeated food frequency questionnaires (every 4 y)

~5,000,000 person years with 45,000 major chronic disease endpoints

- Chronic diseases account for more than **half** of all premature deaths and more than **90%** of yearly healthcare spending in the United States.

Figure 4. Age-adjusted death rates for the 10 leading causes of death in 2020: United States, 2019 and 2020



* COVID-19 became an official cause of death in 2020; rates for 2019 are not applicable.

¹Statistically significant increase in age-adjusted death rate from 2019 to 2020 ($p < 0.05$).

²Statistically significant decrease in age-adjusted death rate from 2019 to 2020 ($p < 0.05$).

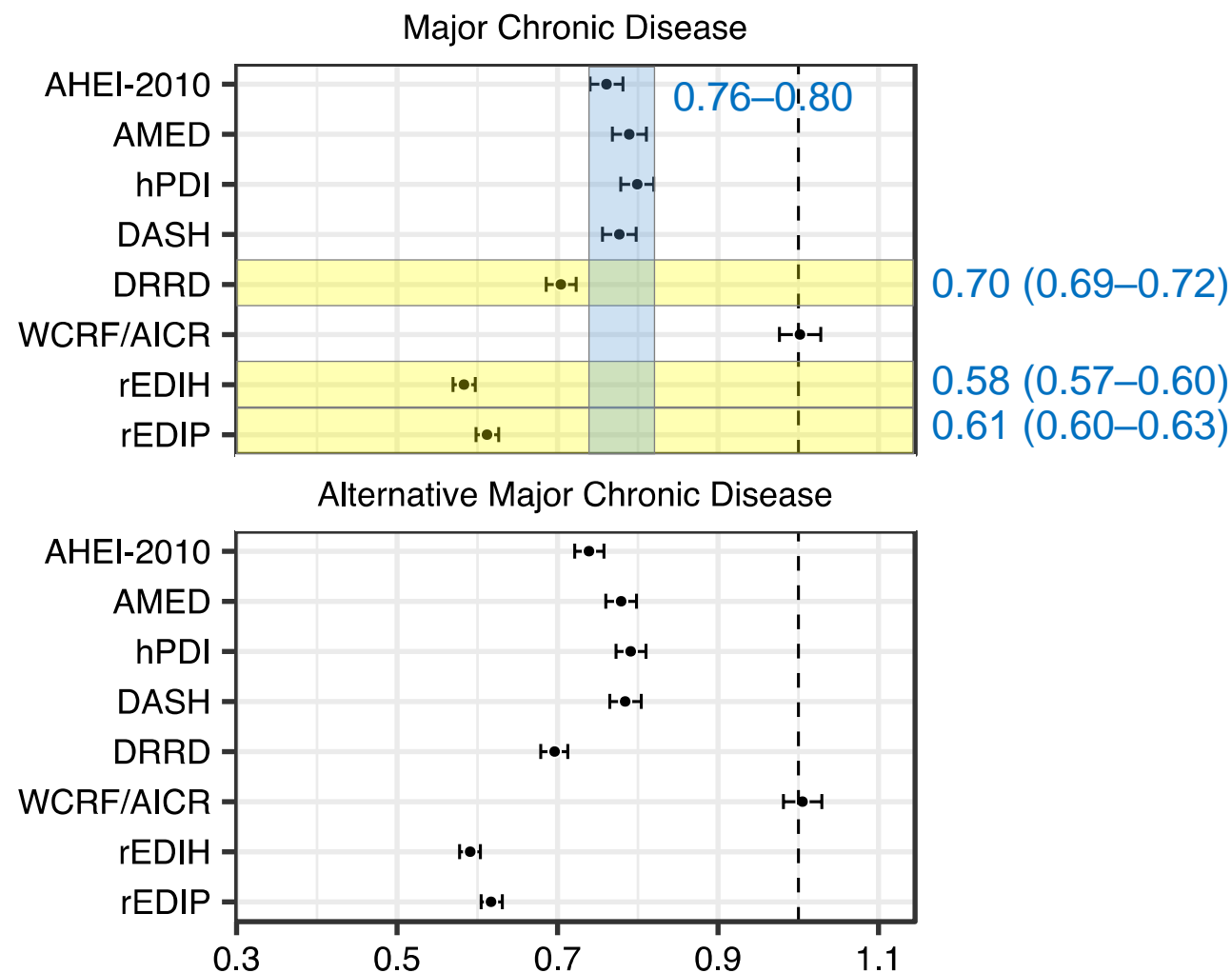
NOTES: A total of 3,383,729 resident deaths were registered in the United States in 2020. The 10 leading causes of death accounted for 74.1% of all deaths in the United States in 2020. Causes of death are ranked according to number of deaths. Rankings for 2019 data are not shown. Data table for Figure 4 includes the number of deaths for leading causes and the percentage of total deaths. Access data table for Figure 4 at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db427-tables.pdf#4>.

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality.

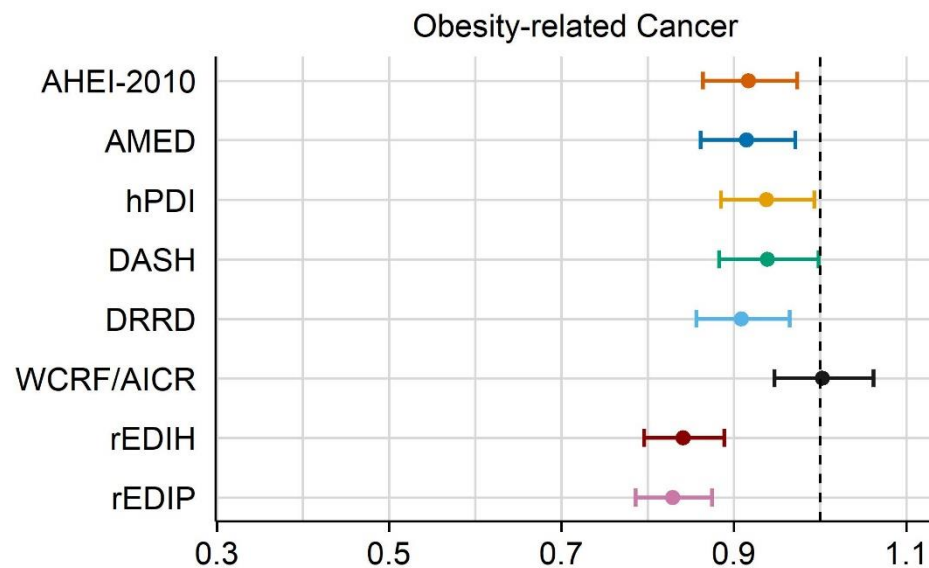
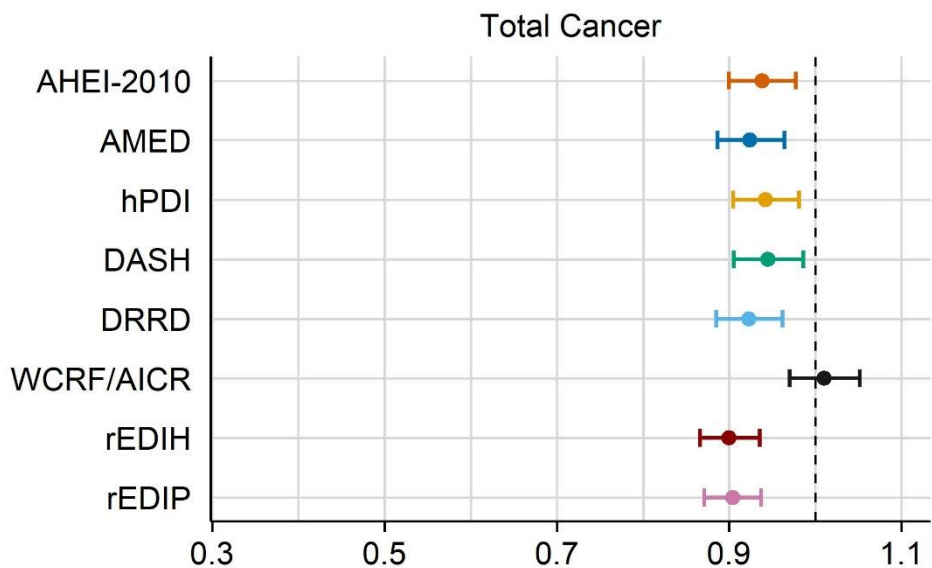
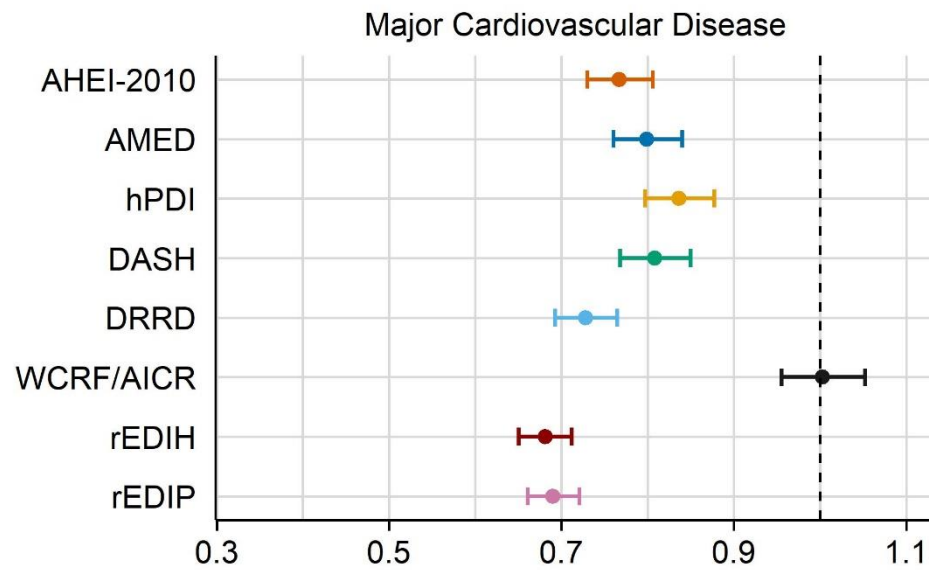
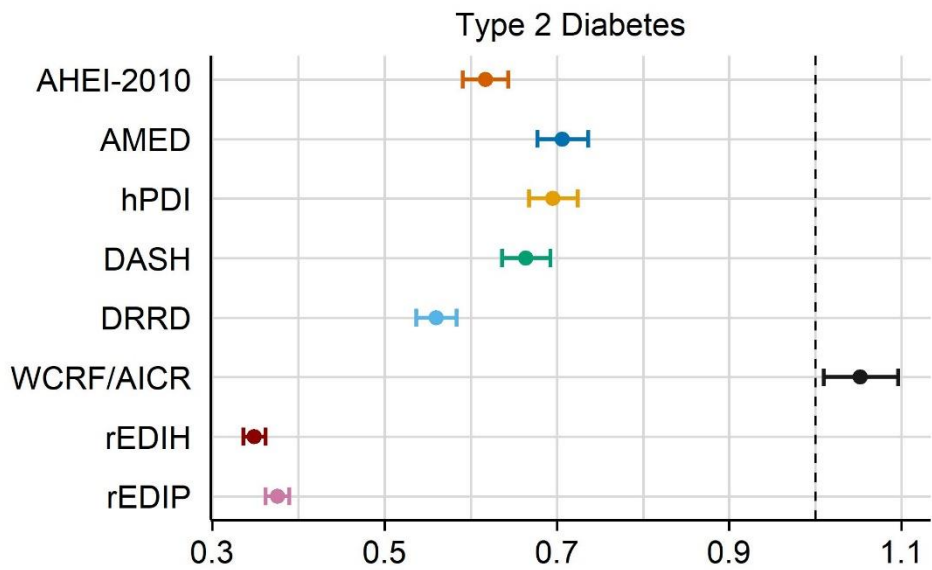
44,975 major chronic disease events

- 11,007 major CVD (24.5%)
- 16,223 total cancer (36.1%)
- 17,857 diabetes (39.7%)

Major chronic disease + Non-traumatic death



Hazards ratio for an increment from 10th to 90th percentile in score adjusted for physical activity, socioeconomic status, cigarette smoking, multivitamin use, family history of diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease, aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, postmenopausal hormone use and total energy intake (alcohol consumption was adjusted for DASH, hPDI, and DRRD).



Multivariable-adjusted associations of cumulative average dietary patterns (90th to 10th %ile) (n = 205,852).

P. Wang et al. Nature Med 2023

Hazard Ratio comparing 90th to 10th percentile

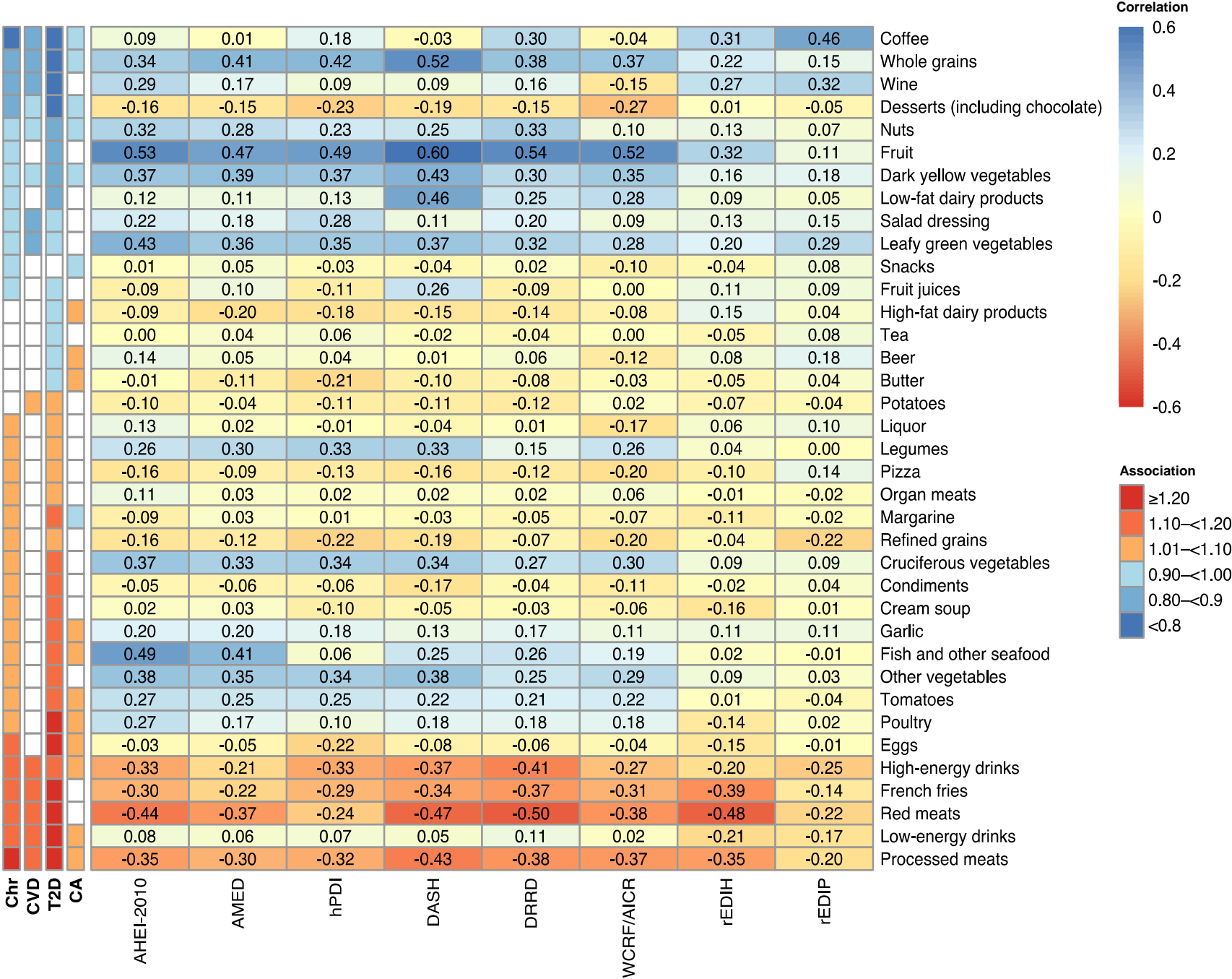
AHEI-2010, Alternative Healthy Eating Index-2010; AMED, Alternate Mediterranean Diet score; DASH, Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension score; DRRD, Diabetes Risk Reduction Diet; hPDI, Healthful plant-based diet index; rEDIH, reversed Empirical dietary index for hyperinsulinemia; rEDIP, reversed Empirical dietary inflammation pattern; WCRF/AICR, dietary score.

Associations for most dietary patterns consistent in:

- **Men**
- **Women ***
- **Whites**
- **Blacks**
- **Asians**
- **Hispanics**
- **Age < 65 y ***
- **Age > 65 y**
- **BMI <25**
- **BMI >25 ***
- **Never smokers ***
- **Past smokers**
- **Current smokers**
- **Alcohol < 1 drink/day ***
- **Alcohol > 1 drink/day**
- **Neighborhood SES > median**
- **Neighborhood SES < median**

*stronger association

37 food or food group items in relation to total chronic disease from most protective (blue) to most adverse (red)



Most beneficial for chronic disease

- 1. Coffee**
- 2. Whole grains**
- 3. Wine**
- 4. Desserts (incl. chocolate)**
- 5. Nuts**
- 6. Fruits**
- 7. Dark, yellow vegetables**
- 8. Low-fat dairy**
- 9. Salad dressing**
- 10. Leafy, green vegetables**

Least beneficial for chronic disease

- 28. Fish & other seafood**
- 29. Other vegetables**
- 30. Tomatoes**
- 31. Poultry**
- 32. Eggs**
- 33. Sugar-sweetened beverages**
- 34. French fries**
- 35. Red meats**
- 36. Artificially sweetened beverages**
- 37. Processed meats**

Components	AHEI-2010	AMED	hPDI	DASH	DRRD	WCRF	rEDIH	rEDIP
Range	11 0 - 110	9 0 - 9	18 18 - 90	8 8 - 40	9 9 - 45	6 0-5	18 NA	18 NA
Fruit and vegetables								
Fruit								
Vegetables								
Leafy green vegetables								
Dark yellow vegetables								
Other vegetables								
Tomatoes								
Potatoes								
Total fiber								
Whole grains								
Cereal fiber								
Refined grains								
Nuts and legumes								
Nuts								
Legumes								
Total meats								
Red and Processed meats								
Red meats								
Processed meats								
Poultry								
Eggs								
Fish and seafood								
Other fish								
Organ meats								
Miscellaneous animal-based foods								
Percent of total calorie from ultra-processed foods								
Sweets and desserts								
French fries								
Snacks								
Pizza								
Animal fat								
Butter								
Vegetable oils								
Creamy soups								
Margarine								
Sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices								
Sugar-sweetened beverages								
Low-energy beverages								
High-energy beverages								
Fruit juices								
Total alcohol								
Wine								
Beer								
Tea and coffee								
Tea								
Coffee								
Total dairy								
High-fat dairy								
Low-fat dairy								
trans fat								
Long chain omega-3 fatty acids								
Polyunsaturated fatty acids								
Ratio of monounsaturated to saturated fatty acids								
Ratio of polyunsaturated to saturated fatty acids								
Sodium								
Glycemic index								

Key items treated differently among dietary patterns – *more research!*

← Total fruits & vegetables vs specific groups

← Non red meat animal products

← Specific types of fish

← Ultra-processed foods

← Artificially sweetened beverages

← Fruit juices

← Alcohol vs alcoholic beverages

← Tea/coffee

← Low fat dairy

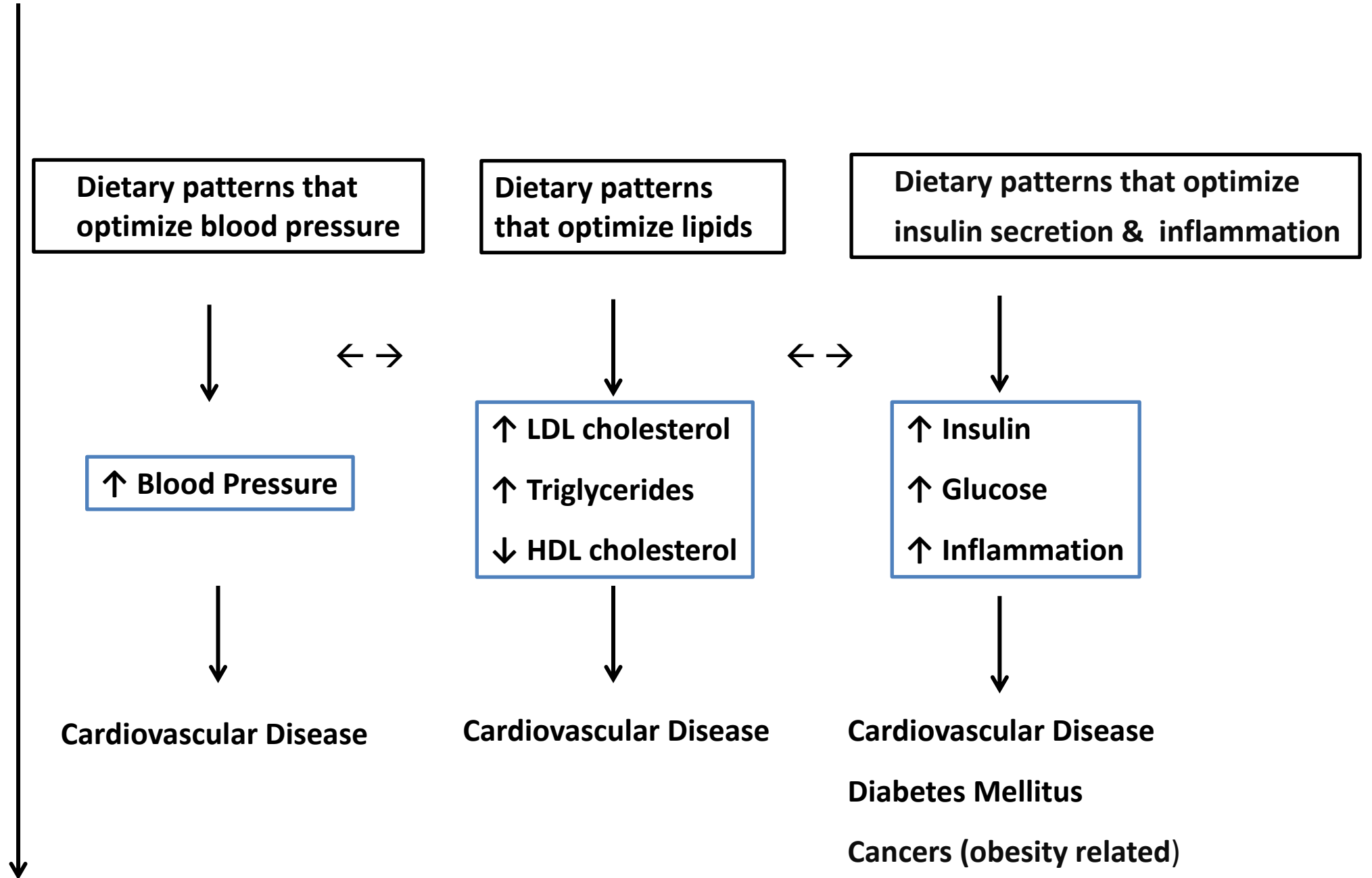
← Fatty foods vs total polyunsaturated/saturated fat ratio

← Sodium

Diet/Lifestyle

Mediator

Disease



**Critical factors
that determine
the “optimal”
diet pattern**

**Strength of
dietary
association
with
intermediates**

**Strength of
association
between
intermediate
and specific
disease(s)**

**Relative
importance of
the disease**

Diet/Lifestyle
Mediator
Disease

**Dietary patterns that
optimize blood pressure**

**Dietary patterns
that optimize lipids**

**Dietary patterns that optimize
insulin secretion & inflammation**

↑ Blood Pressure

**↑ LDL cholesterol
↑ Triglycerides
↓ HDL cholesterol**

**↑ Insulin
↑ Glucose
↑ Inflammation**

Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular Disease

Diabetes Mellitus

Cancers (obesity related)

Many Americans do not have an “optimal” diet...
 ... In particular, plant-based items are underconsumed

The core elements of US Dietary Guidelines that make up a healthy dietary pattern:

Figure 1-6

Dietary Intakes Compared to Recommendations: Percent of the U.S. Population Ages 1 and Older Who Are Below and At or Above Each Dietary Goal



***NOTE:** Recommended daily intake of whole grains is to be at least half of total grain consumption, and the limit for refined grains is to be no more than half of total grain consumption.

Data Source: Analysis of What We Eat in America, NHANES 2013-2016, ages 1 and older, 2 days dietary intake data, weighted. *Recommended Intake Ranges:* Healthy U.S.-Style Dietary Patterns (see [Appendix 3](#)).

Key take-home messages

- **Dietary patterns represent a useful approach for research and public health messaging.**
- **Multiple approaches to assess dietary patterns converge on reasonably consistent dietary factors that we should emphasize or limit in our diets.**
- **While some refinements are required, our current knowledge is sufficient to make a large impact on the major chronic diseases.**
- **The use of intermediate biomarkers is a useful approach to help determine optimal dietary patterns.**

Thank you!