

Press Release

7 March 2017

Low carbohydrate diets should be considered for diabetes management

Following a reduced carbohydrate diet can help to lower blood glucose levels, providing a safe and effective strategy for managing diabetes, new research by London Metropolitan University suggests.

In an abstract published in the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, the authors conducted a systematic review of previous intervention studies, analysing changes to participant's glycated haemoglobin levels following a switch to a lower carbohydrate diet. Glycated haemoglobin forms when haemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells, combines with glucose and is used to measure long-term blood glucose levels.

The review, which was conducted by Michelle McKenzie and Sarah Illingworth from London Met's School of Human Sciences, found that individual's glycated haemoglobin levels fell when following a reduced carbohydrate diet (up to 120g per day) with the greatest reduction of 2.2% observed in those consuming under 30g per day.

Lead author Michelle McKenzie said: "Our findings suggest that a reduced carbohydrate diet can be an effective technique for managing diabetes and new guidelines that promote lower carbohydrate intakes for both the general population, and those with diabetes, should seriously be considered.

"More long-term studies are required to ensure that the results can be confidently translated into clinical practice, however, the science at this point in time is compelling and should not be ignored."

Participants following a reduced carbohydrate diet reported a significant decrease in bodyweight, losing a median of 4.7kg over a two year period compared to 2.9kg lost by those consuming a low fat diet. A low carbohydrate diet was also associated with a decrease in the psychological stress associated with diabetes management and a reduction in negative moods between meals.

Co-author Sarah Illingworth said: "It's important to consider which food groups should be used to replace carbohydrates when altering diet. Previous research has

shown that diets high in fat, particularly saturated fat, carry risks for people with Type 2 diabetes.

“Clinical guidelines should be reviewed to consider including low carbohydrate diets as a diabetes management strategy but this does not mean that it will be suitable, or beneficial, for everyone. Changes to diet should only be undertaken after consulting with a qualified dietitian and taking into account individual medical needs.”

The abstract is available to view in the Winter Meeting edition of the *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*.

-Ends-

Notes to editors

For a copy of the abstract or to speak with the researchers please contact Siobhan Pipa in the London Met press office, Tel: +44 (0)20 7133 2465 or s.pipa@londonmet.ac.uk.

McKenzie, M.R. & Illingworth, S. ‘Should a Low Carbohydrate Diet be Recommended for Diabetes Management?’ is published in Proceedings of the Nutrition Society DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0029665117000192>

Contact

Siobhan Pipa | PR Officer
London Metropolitan University

+020 7133 2465
s.pipa@londonmet.ac.uk

About London Metropolitan University

London Metropolitan University has been providing education to people from all backgrounds since 1848, with the creation of the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Working Men. Six schools teach cutting-edge, relevant courses across the arts, sciences, business, law and humanities. Accelerator – London Met’s specialist business incubator – helps graduates get their enterprises up and running and was named among the Top Five ‘Most Active’ accelerators in Europe in 2015, highlighting its contribution to London’s booming start-up industry.

London Met is home to world-leading academics who regularly give expert comment to the media. The University scored well in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, being ranked 4th in the country for Area Studies and performing strongly in Education and Social Studies.

The University is strongly focused on employability. In 2016, London Met recorded its highest ever graduate employment score, with 93% of all 2014/15 graduates in work or further study six months after graduation. It was also ranked above all five Russell Group universities in London for teaching quality in 2016.

londonmet.ac.uk/news