Mediterranean Diet is More Effective When You've Got Money

Italian scientists studying the Mediterranean diet have found evidence that the quality of your food matters when it comes to health benefits. Researchers from Mediterranean Neurological Institute (I.R.C.C.S. Neuromed) released their findings in 2017 after studying more than 18,000 men and women since 2005. The Molisani study saw that wealthier participants experienced a greater reduction of cardiovascular risks.

> *Given a comparable adherence to the Mediterranean diet, the most advantaged groups were more likely to report a larger number of indices of high quality diet as opposed to people with low socioeconomic status…For example, within those reporting an optimal adherence to the Mediterranean diet (as measured by a score comprising fruits and nuts, vegetables, legumes, cereals, fish, fats, meat, dairy products and alcohol intake) people with high income or higher educational level consumed products richer in antioxidants and polyphenols, and had a greater diversity in fruit and vegetables choice. We have also found a socioeconomic gradient in the consumption of whole-grain products and in the preferred cooking methods. These substantial differences in consuming products belonging to Mediterranean diet lead us to think that quality of foods may be as important for health as quantity and frequency of intake"*
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> *Licia Iacoviello, head of the Laboratory of Nutritional and Molecular Epidemiology at I.R.C.C.S. Neuromed*

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Here is yet another insidious way lower-income people are

disadvantaged.

The Mediterranean diet is characterized by a large quantity of olive oil, unrefined grains, legumes, and diverse fruits and vegetables. It includes moderate amounts of fish, dairy, and wine. In addition, not all items are created equal – cheaper versions of things (like canned vegetables as opposed to fresh) do not contain the same nutritional makeup as fresher, more expensive options. Lower-income people are less likely to be able to afford the quality and diversity of products needed to reap the benefits of the Mediterranean diet.