



Undesirable Cardiometabolic Outcomes of Fast-Food Patterns

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Although there is no agreement on the definition for the term of fast food, it is mainly defined as "easily prepared processed food served in snack bars and restaurants as a quick meal or to be taken away" (1). Over the past two decades, an increasing trend in global fast food marketing and a public interest for consuming of take-away foods has developed. Fast foods are quick, convenient, relatively inexpensive, and liked by people of most different age groups; they are rich in highly processed meat and refined carbohydrate, sodium, total fat, saturated and trans fatty acids, cholesterol, and poor in essential nutrients and dietary fibers (2, 3).

Findings from both cross-sectional and prospective cohort studies indicated that fast food consumption and out-of-home eating behavior is a main risk factor for poor diet quality, and development of overweight and obesity, abdominal fat gain, impaired insulin and glucose homeostasis, lipid and lipoprotein disorders, induction of systemic inflammation and oxidative stress; higher frequent consumption of fast food also increased the risk of developmental type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (4, 5). A 3-year follow-up among Iranian adults, showed that the risk of metabolic syndrome in the highest compared to the lowest quartile of fast foods increased by 85%

(OR=1.85, 95% CI=1.17–2.95); in this study, the adverse effects of fast food consumption were more pronounced in younger adults (<30 yr), and participants who had greater waist to hip ratio, consumed less phytochemical-rich foods or had low-fiber diet (6).

Considering the current data, frequent consumption of fast foods and out-of-home meals is a critical dietary risk factor for development of metabolic disorders and other non-communicable diseases. The large number of fast food restaurants, growing public interest to out-of-home and ready-to-eat foods, and undesirable health outcomes of fast food consumption should be considered by policy makers in the field of health and nutrition.

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