Dietary quality, meat intake and health - DTU Orbit (24/11/2018)

Dietary quality, meat intake and health
The aim of the project is to evaluate if Danes eating a healthy diet with a high intake of red and processed meat have the same risk of developing cancer and heart diseases as others with a similar dietary pattern, but with a low intake of meat. There is a trend of decreasing meat intake among consumers. One reason is that meat intake has been associated with increased risk of disease, mainly cancer. Due to the relatively high percentage of saturated fatty acids in meat, an increased risk of heart diseases may also be associated with high meat intake. However, the scientific evidence of an association between meat intake and disease and mortality is based on studies of varying quality. For example, several studies have shown that a high intake of meat is often associated with an unhealthy lifestyle, which can impair the results. In Denmark, the national dietary surveys provide detailed, good quality data about dietary intake, and national administrative health and death registers are also of very high quality. Thus, combining these data makes it possible to perform high quality estimates of associations between meat intake in population groups with different dietary quality and the risk of disease and death. The project includes a description of which foods that characterise the diet of healthy Danes that to a great extent follow the official, national dietary guidelines and and live up to the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations, and who's diet contain a high level of red and processed meat. It also provides an estimate of the association between red and processed meat intake and the risk of developing colorectal cancer or heart disease. The results can be used as a solid base by nutrition and health professionals and by the meat industry to the public discussion about the role of meat in a healthy diet, so the consumers can make an informed choice. The project has received financial support from "Promilleafgiftsfonden for landbrug".

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01/01/2019 → 31/12/2019

Keywords: Processed meat, Cancer, Heart disease
Nature of activity type: Research
Collaborators: National Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark
Project: Research