High-Protein Diets and Renal Health

High-protein diets (i.e., protein content of more than 25% of energy or more than 2 g/kg body weight per day) based on meat and dairy products are repeatedly promoted for weight reduction and better health, but the evidence supporting these notions is quite dubious. As described in the present review, there is a reason to be concerned about adverse effects of such diets, including glomerular hyperfiltration, hypertensive effects of a concomitant increase in dietary sodium, and an increased risk of nephrolithiasis. These diet-induced physiological consequences might lead to an increase in the prevalence of chronic kidney disease in the general population without preexisting kidney disease. Accordingly, we find medical reasons to refrain from promoting high-protein diets, in particular those based on meat and dairy products, until clear-cut evidence for the safety and for the superiority of such diets on human health has been provided.