

## 23386 | Adherence to the Mediterranean diet among U.Porto students: study of associated sociodemographic and lifestyle characteristics

Mariana Carvalho<sup>1</sup>; Vera Dias<sup>1</sup>; Ana Dias<sup>1</sup>; Mariana Rangel<sup>1</sup>; Beatriz Teixeira<sup>1,2</sup>; Rui Poínhos<sup>1</sup>; Bruno Oliveira<sup>1,3</sup>; Cláudia Afonso<sup>1,2</sup>

Faculty of Nutrition and Food Sciences, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal<sup>1</sup>; LIAAD – INESC TEC, Campus da Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto, Porto, Portugal<sup>2</sup>; 3EPIUnit ITR, Instituto de Saúde Pública da Universidade do Porto, Universidade do Porto, (EPIUnit ITR, Institute of Public Health of the University Porto, University of Porto) Porto, Portugal<sup>3</sup>

---

**Background & Aim:** The Mediterranean diet is a dietary pattern considered to be healthy, which includes the consumption of a variety of fresh, local and seasonal, low-processed foods and integrates principles such as frugality, simple cooking, emphasizing conviviality around the table. This dietary pattern is associated with a healthy lifestyle, involving not only healthy and balanced diet but also regular physical activity. Studies have shown that this type of diet decreases the risk of several pathologies, like cardiovascular diseases and metabolic syndrome, promoting mental health and longevity. This study aims to understand the associations between the adherence to the Mediterranean dietary pattern and sociodemographic and lifestyle characteristics. **Methods:** A survey was conducted among the U.Porto student population, regarding the adherence to the Mediterranean Dietary Pattern (PREDIMED [1,2,3]), sociodemographic features (sex, age) and lifestyle characteristics, such as physical activity and mean daily hours of sleep. **Results:** The results reveal that only 28.5% of our sample adhered to the Mediterranean diet, with women being more likely to adhere to this diet pattern when compared to men (31,7% vs 22,6%,  $p=0,051$ ). There was a weak association between age and adherence to the Mediterranean diet ( $r=0,04$ ,  $p=0,390$ ), which can be explained by 50% of our sample being between the ages of 18 and 21. The association between physical activity and adherence to the Mediterranean diet was significant, indicating that those with higher adherence to this dietary pattern were more likely to engage in physical activity (81,2% vs 67,5%,  $p=0,004$ ). No significant relationship was found between sleep duration and adherence to the Mediterranean diet ( $p=0,520$ ). **Conclusions:** Despite all the evidence of the Mediterranean Diet Pattern's benefits, U.Porto students remain largely unaware of its advantages. Our results emphasize the importance of promoting the Mediterranean diet patterns as part of a healthier approach to life.

**Keywords:** Mediterranean Diet, Dietary Patterns, Healthy lifestyle.

**Acknowledgments:**

We thank the collaboration in data collection done by our 1st-year colleagues, enrolled in Food Consumption Assessment and Biostatistics I of the degree in Nutrition Sciences of FCNAUP.

We would like to express our gratitude to our professors for their invaluable help and mentorship throughout this study.

**References:**

[1] Martínez-González MA, García-Arellano A, Toledo E, Salas-Salvadó J, Buil-Cosiales P, Corella D, et al. A 14-item Mediterranean diet assessment tool and obesity indexes among high-risk subjects: the PREDIMED trial. PLoS One. 2012; 7(8):e43134;

[2] Afonso L, Moreira T, Oliveira A. Índices de adesão ao padrão alimentar mediterrânico – a base metodológica para estudar a sua relação com a saúde. Revista Factores de Risco, 31:48–55, 2014;

[3] Gregório MJ, Rodrigues AM, Salvador C, Dias SS, de Sousa RD, Mendes JM, et al. Validation of the Telephone-Administered Version of the Mediterranean Diet Adherence Screener (MEDAS) Questionnaire. Nutrients. 2020; 12(5)