

Diet quality in subjects with and without depressive and anxiety disorders. By Deborah Gibson-Smith¹, Mariska Bot¹, Ingeborg Brouwer², Marjolein Visser², and Brenda W.J.H. Penninx¹.

Depressive symptoms have been associated with eating a less healthy diet, but few studies have examined dietary intake in persons with a clinical diagnosis of depression. We used data from the Netherlands Study of Depression and Anxiety to study the relationship between depressive and anxiety disorders and their clinical features (type of disorder, chronicity, and severity) with dietary intake.

We found that people currently suffering from depression and/or anxiety disorders had significantly less healthy diets than their healthy counterparts. Those who were suffering from concurrent depression and anxiety disorders seemed to have the least healthy diet. Additionally, the more severe the depression or anxiety symptoms, the worse (less healthy) the diet was. Also those with more chronic depression/anxiety (at least 3 previous episodes) had less healthy diet.

Based on our results, we would conclude that eating an unhealthy diet, thus not complying to a Mediterranean diet, is related to depression and anxiety disorders. However, we are unable to determine whether it is having an unhealthy diet that leads to the development of depression and anxiety, or whether suffering from depression or anxiety leads to eating a less healthy diet.