

Abstract

The Science behind ‘Mood Food’, the Link between Diet and Depression/Anxiety: What We Know, What We Don’t Know, and Where to Next [†]

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Abstract: Around 20% of New Zealanders will suffer from depression and/or anxiety in their lifetime. There is emerging evidence that an unhealthy dietary pattern may increase the risk of developing depression or anxiety, whereas a healthy dietary pattern may decrease it. There are a number of proposed mechanisms for the diet–mood relationship, including micronutrient and omega-3 intake, modulation of inflammatory processes, and alterations in gut microbiota composition and function. The potential for clinical dietary interventions as adjunct therapy for mood disorders, or just to increase mental wellbeing, is exciting; however, our understanding of the diet–mood relationship is still developing and there are sometimes conflicting results among studies. This presentation will discuss the complexities of the diet–mood relationship, including the challenges in researching this area, the impact of individual differences in biology and psychology, the bidirectional nature of the relationship, and the interaction with the gut microbiome and stress.

Keywords: depression; anxiety; mood; mental health; diet; food; inflammation; microbiome-gut-brain axis



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