Cardiovascular benefits of eating oats: evidence explained and mechanisms explored

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There is increasing evidence from both observational and intervention studies that high consumption of whole-grain food is associated with low risk of chronic disease such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. The bulk of the evidence for the benefits of wholegrain comes mainly from observational studies, but evidence of benefit in intervention studies is increasing. However, the difference in composition between types of whole grain food could determine different physiological responses with regard to cardiovascular risk markers. Research has particularly focused on △-glucan-rich cereals such as oats for their potential effect on serum cholesterol concentration and postprandial glycaemia, with inconsistent results. Other mechanisms responsible for the beneficial effects of oats on cardiovascular risk have been suggested, and include lowering blood pressure and inflammatory markers, improving vascular function and increasing satiety. The presentation will critically review the evidence to date regarding the cardiovascular benefits of increased oat-based products intake particularly focusing on long-term intervention studies that investigated the effects of oats or oat bran on cardiovascular risk factors.

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