

## The Connection Between Nutrition and Mental Health: An Overview

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**Abstract:** The anticipated outcomes in the treatment of mental disorders are not always achieved with applied psychopharmacotherapy and psychotherapy. Consequently, there is a growing focus on alternative interventions. Recent years have witnessed a surge in research exploring the influence of nutrition on mental well-being, presenting a potential avenue for preventing various mental disorders and reducing the prevalence of such conditions. This review seeks to address the impact of lifestyle and nutrition on mental health and ascertain the existence of scientific evidence supporting the connection between diet and mental well-being. A thorough examination of the available literature was conducted using the PubMed database, resulting in 3,473 records. From these, 356 sources directly relevant to the study's theme were identified, with a subsequent selection of those possessing the highest scientific value based on bibliometric impact factors. Given the ongoing transformations such as urbanization, globalization, and shifts in eating habits, understanding the correlations between these factors and their influence on mental states becomes crucial. This knowledge opens up potential avenues for implementing novel and effective dietary, pharmacological, therapeutic, and, most importantly, preventive interventions. Among these interventions, rational diet, physical activity, the utilization of psychobiotics, and the intake of antioxidants are identified as having the highest therapeutic potential. Additionally, research highlights the existence of nutritional interventions with psych protective capabilities.

**Keywords:** Nutrition, Mental Health, Precision Nutrition, Longitudinal Studies, Mechanistic Studies, Gut-Brain Axis, Dietary Interventions, Clinical Settings, Dietary Patterns.

## **I. Introduction**

In contemporary healthcare, the intricate interplay between nutrition and mental health has emerged as a captivating and pivotal area of study. The recognition that dietary patterns and nutritional status may significantly influence mental well-being has spurred increased interest and research efforts. As individuals and societies grapple with escalating rates of mental health disorders, understanding the nuanced relationship between what we consume and our psychological states becomes imperative [1]. This research seeks to delve into the complex web of connections between nutrition and mental health, aiming to unravel the mechanisms through which dietary factors impact psychological well-being. As the prevalence of mental health challenges continues to rise globally, investigating the potential of nutrition interventions to prevent and alleviate these issues is not only timely but holds the promise of contributing to more holistic approaches in mental healthcare. This introduction sets the groundwork for exploring the nuanced dynamics between nutrition and mental health, emphasizing the need for comprehensive research to shed light on this intricate relationship and its implications for public health [2]. Against this backdrop, this research aims to bridge the gap in understanding by investigating the specific links between nutrition and mental health. The multifaceted nature of mental health conditions, ranging from depression and anxiety to more severe disorders like bipolar disorder and eating disorders, prompts a closer examination of the potential impact of dietary patterns on the prevention, management, and treatment of these conditions. The urgency of this research is underscored by the escalating global burden of mental health disorders [3]. With statistics indicating a significant rise in disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) attributed to mental health issues, coupled with the economic toll on societies, there is a pressing need for novel and effective interventions. Preliminary research suggests that nutritional interventions could offer a viable avenue for improving mental health outcomes. As we navigate an era marked by rapid urbanization, changing lifestyles [4], and dietary shifts, the correlations between these phenomena and their influence on mental states become increasingly complex. Recognizing the potential impact of nutrition on mental health not only opens avenues for new therapeutic approaches but also positions preventive interventions at the forefront of public health strategies. This study, therefore, aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding the intricate relationship between nutrition and mental health [5]. By employing a rigorous methodology and building upon the existing literature, it aspires to uncover actionable insights

that may inform public health policies, clinical practices, and individual lifestyle choices [6]. As we embark on this exploration, the prospect of enhancing mental well-being through dietary interventions becomes not only a scientific endeavor but a pathway toward fostering healthier and more resilient communities [7].

### **A. Background**

The background study provides context and foundational information for a research project, offering a thorough understanding of the topic's history, existing knowledge, and relevance. In this context, a background study on the connection between nutrition and mental health aims to explore the historical evolution of this field, summarize current knowledge, and underscore the significance of investigating this relationship [8]. The historical perspective reveals the evolution of thought and research on the interplay between nutrition and mental health. Understanding past studies and breakthroughs contributes to a comprehensive overview, highlighting how the field has developed over time. This may involve tracing key milestones, influential research, and paradigm shifts in the understanding of nutrition's impact on mental well-being [9]. The current state of knowledge involves reviewing existing literature, research, and theories on the subject. This includes insights into the biochemical mechanisms linking nutrition to brain function, the role of specific nutrients in mental health, and the impact of dietary patterns on psychological well-being. Recognizing gaps or controversies in current knowledge sets the stage for identifying research questions and objectives [10]. The significance of studying the connection between nutrition and mental health is underscored in the background study. This involves examining the prevalence of mental health disorders, the societal and economic burden of mental health issues, and the potential for nutrition interventions to contribute to prevention and treatment. It also considers the global and national priorities related to mental health, as well as the increasing recognition of lifestyle factors, including diet, in mental health policies and initiatives [11].

### **II. Literature Review**

The reviewed research papers collectively form a literature survey exploring the intricate relationship between nutrition and mental health, with a specific focus on the impact of probiotics and dietary interventions on various psychiatric disorders. One study conducted a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial, revealing that the probiotic *Lactobacillus plantarum* 299v significantly decreased kynurenine concentration and improved cognitive

functions in individuals with major depression [12]. Another investigation explored the effects of a psychonic supplement on serum brain-derived neurotrophic factor levels in depressive patients, emphasizing the potential role of gut microbiota modulation in mental health [13]. An exploration into the severity of Alzheimer's disease and its responsiveness to modifying gut microbiota through a double-blind clinical trial shed light on the complex interplay between the gut-brain axis and neurodegenerative disorders. Additionally, studies delved into the effects of probiotic supplementation on cognitive function and metabolic status in Alzheimer's disease[14], providing insights into potential adjunctive therapeutic strategies. The research extends beyond Alzheimer's disease, as one study investigated the treatment targeting gut dysbiosis in myalgia encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome [15], emphasizing neuropsychological symptoms and sex-related differences. Another study explored the efficacy and safety of Lactobacillus plantarum C29-fermented soybean in individuals with mild cognitive impairment, contributing valuable data on the potential benefits of probiotics in cognitive health [16]. In the realm of cognitive decline in older adults, studies underscored the positive impact of Bifidobacterium breve A1 supplementation on cognitive function, offering a potential avenue for addressing age-related cognitive impairment. Investigations into broader dietary factors, including magnesium intake diet, highlighted their association with type II diabetes and heart failure risk, respectively [17].

Author & Year	Area	Methodology	Key Findings	Challenges	Pros	Cons	Application
Rudzi et al. (2012)	Depression	Double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study	Probiotic Lactobacillus plantarum 299v decreases kynurenine concentration and improves cognitive functions in	Limited current knowledge, Need for broad review	Insights into psychoprop hylaxis, Cognitive improvement	Lack of extensive literature, Limited scope	Mental health interventions

			major depression				
Hydrarad et al. (2012)	Depression	Post hoc analysis of a randomized clinical trial	Psychobiotics supplement affects serum brain-derived neurotrophic factor levels in depressive patients	Individual differences, Generalizability	Potential for personalized treatment	Limited generalizability	Mental health interventions
Agahiet al. (2015)	Alzheimer's	Double-blind clinical trial	Severity of Alzheimer's disease and its responsiveness to modifying gut microbiota	Complex gut-brain interactions	Insight into neurodegenerative disorders	Complexity of gut-brain axis	Alzheimer's treatment strategies
Akbariet al. (2016)	Alzheimer's	Randomized, double-blind, controlled trial	Probiotic supplementation on cognitive function and metabolic status in Alzheimer's disease	Limited sample size	Potential for adjunctive therapy	Limited sample size	Alzheimer's treatment strategies
Tamtajiet al. (2011)	Alzheimer's	Randomized, double-blind, controlled trial	Probiotic and selenium co-supplementation effects on clinical, metabolic, and genetic status in Alzheimer's	Ethical considerations, Generalizability	Comprehensive insights into treatment	Ethical considerations	Alzheimer's treatment strategies

			disease				
Wallis et al. (2010)	Chronic Fatigue	Open-label pilot study	Treatment targeting gut dysbiosis in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome	Limited sample size, Sex-related differences	Neuropsychological symptom insights	Limited sample size	Chronic fatigue treatment strategies
Hwang et al. (2009)	Cognitive Impairment	Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial	Efficacy and safety of Lactobacillus plantarum C29-fermented soybean in mild cognitive impairment	Variable responses, Need for long-term data	Potential cognitive health benefits	Variable responses	Cognitive health interventions
Kobayashi et al. (2012, 2013)	Cognitive Decline	Open-label, single-arm study; Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial	Bifidobacterium breve A1 supplementation's impact on cognitive decline in older adults	Limited generalizability, Need for long-term data	Positive impact on cognitive function	Limited generalizability	Cognitive health interventions
Nanri	Diet	Prospect	Magnesium	Dietary	Association	Dietary	Diabete

et al. (2010)	and Diabetes	ive study	intake and type II diabetes in Japanese men and women	assessme nt limitation s	between magnesium intake and diabetes	assessme nt limitation s	s preventi on strategi es
Ibsen et al. (2011)	Diet and Heart Failure	Cohort study	DASH diet association with lower heart failure risk	Self-reporting bias, Dietary assessme nt limitation s	Lower heart failure risk	Self-reporting bias	Heart failure preventi on strategi es
Chatte rton et al. (2012)	Depres sion	Econom ic evaluati on	Economic impact of dietary intervention for major depression	Economic modeling complexit ies	Economic viability of dietary intervention s	Economi c modeling complexiti es	Mental health policy and econom ics
Rogers et al. (2008)	Depres sion	Random ized controlle d trial	No effect of n-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid supplementation on depressed mood and cognitive function	Variable individual responses	Clarification of limited efficacy	Variable individua l responses	Mental health interven tions

**Table 1. Summarizes the Review of Literature of Different Author**

An economic evaluation of a dietary intervention for adults with major depression emphasized the potential societal and economic implications of incorporating nutrition into mental health

care. Finally, a study explored the impact of n-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid supplementation on mood and cognitive function, contributing insights into the role of essential fatty acids in mental well-being.

### III. Methodology

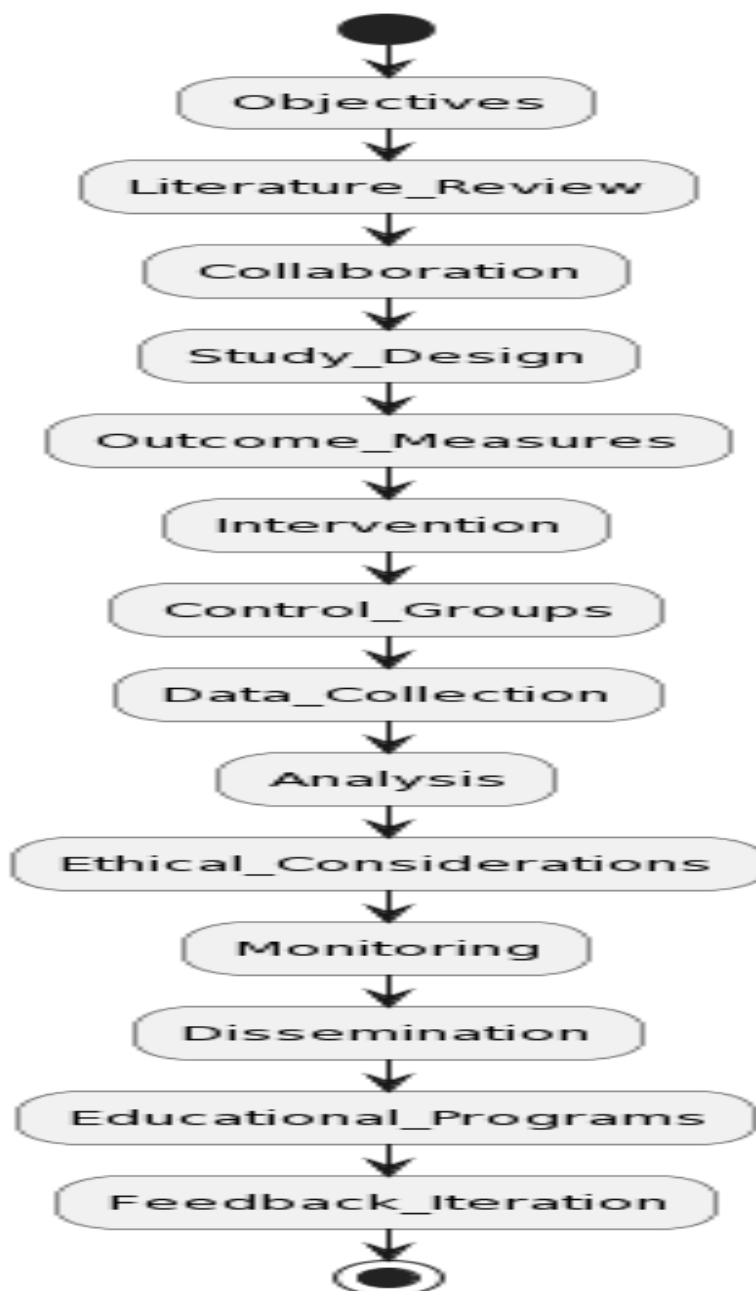


Figure 1. Flow Chart for Processing Diagram



The implementation of the connection between nutrition and mental health requires a systematic and thorough methodology. To commence, conduct a comprehensive literature review to grasp existing research findings and identify gaps. Clearly define the study's objectives, specifying whether the focus is on prevention, treatment, or overall mental well-being. Collaboration with experts in nutrition, mental health, and relevant stakeholders is crucial for a holistic approach. Choose an appropriate study design, considering factors such as duration, sample size, and ethical considerations. Define primary and secondary outcome measures, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative assessments. Develop a structured intervention plan, personalized based on individual needs and preferences, incorporating nutritional elements known to positively impact mental health. Include control or comparison groups, randomized to control for confounding variables. Implement a robust data collection process and employ suitable statistical methods for analysis. Ensure ethical considerations such as participant confidentiality and informed consent. Establish long-term monitoring mechanisms to assess sustained effects on mental health and consider follow-up assessments. Disseminate findings through peer-reviewed publications, conferences, and community outreach. Develop educational programs to raise awareness among the general population and healthcare providers. Gather feedback for continuous refinement of the methodology, iterating based on emerging evidence and lessons learned. In adopting this comprehensive methodology, valuable insights can contribute to the evolving understanding of the intricate relationship between nutrition and mental health.

#### **IV. Cycle of Food for Good Mood**

The intricate relationship between food and mood constitutes a dynamic cycle, where dietary choices influence emotional well-being, and in turn, emotional states can impact food preferences. This bidirectional interaction is often referred to as the "Cycle of Food and Mood." Several key elements contribute to this cycle:

##### **A. Nutrient Intake**

- **Impact on Neurotransmitters:** Consuming nutrient-rich foods provides the body with essential building blocks for neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, influencing mood regulation.
- **Blood Sugar Levels:** The balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats in meals can affect blood sugar levels, influencing energy levels and mood stability.

**B. Gut-Brain Connection:**

- **Microbiota Influence:** The gut microbiota plays a crucial role in digestion and nutrient absorption. The composition of gut bacteria can impact mood and mental health through the gut-brain axis.
- **Probiotics and Psychobiotics:** Certain foods containing probiotics and psychobiotics can positively influence the gut microbiota, potentially improving mood and reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety.

**C. Emotional Eating:**

- **Coping Mechanism:** Emotional states, such as stress, sadness, or boredom, can trigger cravings for specific foods. Emotional eating, in turn, can affect mood temporarily but may lead to guilt or dissatisfaction afterward.

**D. Hormonal Factors**

- **Hormonal Regulation:** Hormones such as cortisol and insulin play roles in both mood regulation and metabolism. Imbalances or fluctuations in these hormones can impact mood and food choices.

**E. Food Choices and Cognitive Function**

- **Impact on Cognitive Function:** Certain nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and vitamins, are linked to cognitive function and mental clarity. A well-balanced diet can support overall brain health.

**F. Social and Cultural Influences**

- **Social Connection:** Sharing meals with others and participating in social activities related to food can contribute to a sense of connection and well-being.
- **Cultural Practices:** Cultural preferences and traditions regarding food can influence both dietary choices and emotional experiences related to food.

**G. Feedback Loop**

- **Reinforcing Patterns:** Positive or negative experiences with certain foods may create reinforcing patterns, impacting future dietary choices and emotional responses.

Aspect	Influence	Mechanism	Examples	Strategies
Nutrient Intake	Neurotransmitter Balance	Essential nutrients contribute to	Balanced meals with proteins,	Adopting a well-rounded diet

		serotonin and dopamine production	carbohydrates, and fats	
	Blood Sugar Levels	Nutrient composition affects blood sugar, influencing energy and mood stability	Avoiding excessive refined sugars; opting for complex carbohydrates	Maintaining balanced macronutrient intake
Gut-Brain Connection	Microbiota Influence	Gut bacteria impact mood through the gut-brain axis	Probiotic-rich foods (yogurt, kefir); incorporating fermented foods	Including probiotics in the diet
	Emotional Eating	Emotional states trigger cravings, influencing food choices	Mindful eating practices; addressing emotional triggers	Developing awareness of emotional eating habits
Hormonal Factors	Hormonal Regulation	Hormones such as cortisol and insulin impact both mood and metabolism	Managing stress levels; adopting a balanced diet	Stress reduction techniques; maintaining blood sugar balance
Food Choices and Cognitive Function	Cognitive Function	Certain nutrients support cognitive function and mental clarity	Omega-3 fatty acids (fish); antioxidants (berries); vitamins	Prioritizing nutrient-dense foods for cognitive health
Social and Cultural Influences	Social Connection	Sharing meals contributes to a sense of connection and well-being	Engaging in social activities around food; communal dining	Fostering social connections through meals
	Cultural Practices	Cultural preferences influence dietary	Incorporating traditional and	Respecting and embracing

		choices and emotional experiences	culturally relevant foods	cultural food practices
Feedback Loop	Reinforcing Patterns	Positive/negative experiences create patterns impacting future choices	Identifying and disrupting negative patterns; reinforcing positive habits	Developing awareness and intentional decision-making

**Table 2. Comparative Study of Various Food for Good Mood**

**A. Data Collection Survey**

- Conduct a comprehensive literature review to understand existing research and findings related to the link between nutrition and mental health.
- Identify key studies, methodologies, and gaps in the current knowledge base.

**B. Define Objectives:**

- Clearly define the objectives of your study or intervention. Determine whether you are focusing on prevention, treatment, or overall mental well-being.

**C. Collaboration and Stakeholder Involvement:**

- Engage with experts in nutrition, mental health, and related fields.
- Involve stakeholders such as healthcare professionals, dietitians, psychologists, and community representatives to ensure a holistic approach.

**D. Study Design:**

- Choose an appropriate study design based on your objectives (e.g., randomized controlled trials, observational studies, intervention studies).
- Consider the duration, sample size, and ethical considerations.

**E. Outcome Measures:**

- Clearly define the primary and secondary outcome measures to assess the impact of nutrition on mental health.
- Include both quantitative measures (e.g., biomarkers, psychological assessments) and qualitative measures (e.g., self-reported mental well-being).

**F. Intervention Components:**

- Develop a structured intervention plan incorporating nutritional elements that are known to influence mental health positively.
- Consider personalized dietary plans based on individual needs and preferences.

**G. Control and Comparison Groups:**

- Include control or comparison groups to assess the intervention's efficacy.
- Randomize participants to control for confounding variables.

**H. Data Collection:**

- Implement a robust data collection process, incorporating validated tools and methods.
- Ensure consistency in data collection across different time points.

**I. Analysis:**

- Use appropriate statistical methods to analyze the collected data.
- Consider subgroup analyses to explore variations in response based on demographic factors.

**J. Ethical Considerations:**

- Obtain ethical approvals from relevant review boards.
- Ensure participant confidentiality, informed consent, and adherence to ethical guidelines.

**K. Long-Term Monitoring:**

- Establish a system for long-term monitoring to assess sustained effects on mental health.
- Consider follow-up assessments to track changes over time.

**L. Dissemination of Results:**

- Share the findings through peer-reviewed publications, conferences, and community outreach.
- Translate research outcomes into practical guidelines for individuals and healthcare professionals.

**M. Educational Programs:**

- Develop educational programs to raise awareness about the connection between nutrition and mental health.

- Target both the general population and healthcare providers.

**N. Feedback and Iteration:**

- Gather feedback from participants, stakeholders, and experts to refine future interventions.
- Continuously iterate and improve the methodology based on emerging evidence and lessons learned.

**V. Conclusion**

The complex relationship between food and mood forms a dynamic, reciprocal loop that profoundly affects general wellbeing. People experience a continual cycle in which food decisions affect emotional states and vice versa through a variety of pathways, such as nutritional intake, the gut-brain connection, hormonal considerations, cognitive performance, and social and cultural impacts. It's critical to understand the significance of eating a well-balanced diet that contains the necessary nutrients for the synthesis of neurotransmitters and cognitive function. Furthermore, knowing how the gut microbiota functions and how it affects mood highlights how important it is to include meals high in probiotics and keep your digestive system in good condition. Hormonal regulation is important, and sustaining both mood stability and metabolic health requires stress management and balanced eating. The advantages of specific nutrients for cognition draw attention to the wider effects of food decisions on mental acuity and brain function. The emotional aspects of food are influenced by social and cultural factors, which highlight the value of group meals and cultural customs in promoting wellbeing and a sense of connection. It takes awareness and techniques to deal with emotional triggers to break potentially harmful cycles, including emotional eating. Additionally, a healthier connection between food and happiness can be achieved by purposefully selecting decisions that reinforce favorable patterns.

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