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Inflammation and Nutrition: Friend or Foe?

Franziska Stumpf, Bettina Keller, Carla Gressies, Philipp Schetz

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Abstract

The importance of the interplay between inflammation and nutrition has generated much interest in recent times. Inflammation has been identified as a key driver for disease-related malnutrition, leading to anorexia, reduced food intake, muscle catabolism, and insulin resistance, which are stimulating a catabolic state. Interesting recent data suggest that inflammation also modulates the response to nutritional treatment. Studies have demonstrated that patients with high inflammation show no response to nutritional interventions, while patients with lower levels of inflammation do. This may explain the contradictory results of nutritional trials to date. Several studies of heterogeneous patient populations, or in the critically ill or advanced cancer patients, have not found significant benefits on clinical outcome. Vice versa, several dietary patterns and nutrients with pro- or anti-inflammatory properties have been identified, demonstrating that nutrition influences inflammation. Within this review, we summarize and discuss recent advances in both the role of inflammation in malnutrition and the effect of nutrition on inflammation.

Keywords: inflammation, nutrition, disease-related malnutrition, anorexia, insulin resistance, muscle cataboli

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