Post-Low Carbohydrate Diet Weight Regain, Stress, and Body Dissatisfaction

Nearly one third of all U.S. adults were considered obese in 2021. This statistic is over three times greater than the 13% obesity rate in adults around the globe. Despite these numbers, the desire for weight loss in the U.S. is abundantly clear, as a total of 33 billion dollars are spent on weight loss products by Americans last year.

Restrictive diets -especially “low-carb” diets- have remained popular choices in society regarding weight loss attempts. This popularity is influenced by controversial studies which advocate that individuals who partake in these diet fads can consume more calories and lose more weight than those who are consuming carbohydrates daily. Although multiple studies have examined the effects of carbohydrate-restrictive diets, their safety in the long term is still heavily debated. Moreover, the dietary restraint theory states that there is an alteration in how food is regulated, switching from physiological to cognitive control; this change makes individuals more susceptible to disinhibited eating. Furthermore, carbohydrates, such as fruits, grains, legumes, etc., are the primary sources of energy that our bodies require during moderate to intense exercise. That being said, their involvement in our diet is crucial, as they allow us to perform and function more efficiently.

Our study will investigate perceived physical (weight gain), mental (stress, body dissatisfaction), and behavioral (binge eating) changes of individuals who had a carbohydrate-restrictive diet in the last year. Theoretically, the completion of our study will add novel literature to the nutrition research field. Practically, we will propose strategies and approaches to restrictive diets, post-diet weight gain, stress, and body dissatisfaction. Furthermore, we also hope that the research findings will give nutrition literature an area to touch on regarding education, training, and research.

