

Role of Whole Grains in Health and Nutrition: Evidence and Recommendations

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Abstract

The evidence showing that higher consumption of whole grains and whole-grain foods results in reduced mortality and morbidity associated with non-communicable diseases is widespread, convincing, and continues to expand worldwide. Results from observational and intervention studies, both separately and when combined in systematic reviews and meta-analyses, have been used by health agencies to develop healthy-eating guidelines promoting whole grain consumption in the context of a more sustainable plant-based diet higher in fruits and vegetables and lower in red meat. However, despite the weight of evidence, consumer confidence and use of whole grains remains below expectations. Renewed effort is required to increase public awareness of whole grains and encourage their consumption. This may be helped by developing global definitions of whole grain and whole-grain foods which can be used in food labelling to identify healthy food options.

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Chris Seal is Emeritus Professor in the Human Nutrition and Exercise Research Centre, Newcastle University. He joined the University in 1983 and has spent the last 40 years promoting interdisciplinary nutrition research and teaching. He is best known for his research on cereal and carbohydrate nutrition; in particular he is an acknowledged international expert on whole-grain nutrition. He has managed some of the largest whole-grain intervention studies worldwide with funding from the Food Standards Agency, Public Health England and Industry. His work underpins efforts to establish legal definitions of 'whole grain' and 'whole-grain food' and he is a member of the Whole Grain Initiative, an International Task Force promoting whole grain consumption and setting national and international dietary intake recommendations.