

Can lycopene be considered an effective protection against cardiovascular disease?

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Abstract

Lycopene is a bioactive component mainly found in tomato. It is characterized by a high antioxidant potential, the highest among carotenoids. Mainly due to this property, lycopene has been suggested to display many beneficial effects, including its potential cardioprotective role. Despite some contradictory observations, which appear to be mainly caused by discrepancies in the different experimental protocols applied in the different studies, growing evidence points to clear benefits of lycopene in the maintenance of cardiovascular function and health. The knowledge about lycopene's preventive effects in atherosclerosis, and other cardiovascular diseases, must be translated into changes in food patterns, aiming to increase the consumption of tomato, tomato-containing products, or other foods with high lycopene content, which can have an important impact on cardiovascular disease, particularly in countries where this represents a major public health concern.

KEYWORDS: Anti-inflammatory; Antioxidant; Cardiovascular diseases; Lycopene

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