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Associations between serum zinc levels and mental health: Findings from the 2010 Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

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Background: Mental health problems are a major public health issue worldwide, and zinc may be associated with psychiatric symptoms, but such associations have not been investigated extensively. This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between serum zinc levels and mental health problems in Korean adults.

Methods: We used data from the Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey V-1, a cross-sectional survey of Korean civilians. Data from 1,748 subjects were analyzed.

Results: Serum zinc levels did not differ significantly according to psychiatric symptoms, including sleep duration, stress, depressed mood, suicidal ideation, and whether respondents sought psychiatric consultation. The frequencies and odds ratios of psychiatric symptoms according to serum zinc tertiles were not significantly associated after adjusting for age, smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity, body mass index, total body fat, and renal function and for daily fat, carbohydrate, and protein intake.

Conclusion: Serum zinc levels may not be associated with psychiatric symptoms in Korean adults without psychiatric disorders.

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