Beef in a Mediterranean Diet Study

Main Study Question

This objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of different quantities of lean beef (0.5, 2.5, or 5.5 oz/day, based on a 2100 calorie diet) incorporated into a modified Mediterranean dietary pattern that is representative of foods typically consumed in the United States on various measures of vascular health.

Motivation for Research

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) dietary pattern, the USDA Food Pattern, and the American Heart Association Diet are all recommended for the reduction of low density cholesterol and blood pressure, two major risk factors for cardiovascular disease. They emphasize consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains; include low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish, legumes, non-tropical vegetable oils and nuts; and limit intake of sweets, sugar-sweetened beverages and red meats. In addition, the Federal Government's 2010 Dietary Guidelines also recommend a DASH dietary pattern, a USDA Food Pattern, or a Mediterranean dietary pattern, all of which are low in saturated fat and reduced in sodium.

Results from the BOLD (Beef in an Optimal Lean Diet) Study, which fed subjects levels of beef roughly twice current USDA estimates of daily beef consumption, suggest that current dietary recommendations to limit lean beef consumption are inappropriately restrictive.

We propose to evaluate three quantities of beef in the context of a Mediterranean diet, compared to an Average American diet to determine whether lean beef can be included in a heart healthy Mediterranean-style dietary pattern that can be followed in the U.S.

This study was conducted from late April to mid-September 2016.