



Original Research

The Dietary Phenolics Effect in the Reduction of Low-Grade Inflammation and Most Cardiac Indicators in Adults

Zainab Musadaq Al Shalah¹, Prof. Faryal Farouk Hussein²

¹Al-Qasim Green University,
College of Food Science, Iraq.

²Tikrit University, Faculty of
Agriculture, Dep. of Food
Science, Ira

Abstract

Low-grade chronic inflammation is a critical pathophysiological contributor to cardiovascular disease (CVD), and nutritional interventions to counteract this disease is an essential pioneer in primary preventive cardiology. Consolidating facts of a theoretical framework, a significant literature research, and an elaborate hypothetical movement-sectional, the research reveals that a more intense adherence to phenolic-rich ways, such as the Mediterranean diet can be a one-on-one variable with a statistically significant reduce degree of significant inflammatory biomolecules, including high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) ($r = -0.18$, $p = 0.001$), interleukin-6 (IL-6), and tumor necrosis factor. Moreover, these dieting patterns are associated with the more desirable cardiac risk profile, including reduced LDL-cholesterol ($\Delta = -2.1\text{mg/dL}$, $p = .003$), increased HDL-cholesterol and decreased systolic blood pressure. A dose-response relationship was found with the participants in the highest tertile diet quality showing almost 50 percent lower hs-CRP levels than the lowest tertile of the sample. The evidence that phenolics are important bioactive components is that exploratory analysis indicates that a significant percentage of these benefits can be attributed to total dietary polyphenol intake by quantifying these benefits using the Phenol-Explorer database. The results are discussed in terms of an integrated biological perspective, including the effects of phenolics in the inhibition of the NF- κ B pathway, switching on of Nrf2 antioxidant defences, and possibly the alteration of the gut microbiome. This piece of research offers solid, multi-dimensional data that entire, plant-based eating habits are not merely associated with, but mechanistically connected to better cardiovascular performance. The paper ends by giving practical recommendations to clinicians on how they can integrate dietary counseling and policymakers on how they can introduce food-environment interventions that ensure the accessibility of phenolic-rich foods to everyone. After all, the study confirms that the power of food is a key, underlying instrument of fighting inflammation and establishing healthier cardiovascular future.

Keywords: Low-Grade Inflammation, Adults, Cardiac Indicators, Dietary Phenolics.



Corresponding Author: **Prof. Faryal Farouk Hussein**, Tikrit University, Faculty of Agriculture, Dep. of Food Science, Iraq
E-mail: alwawaalihussien73@gmail.com



© Copyright 2026 The Current Medical Research and Opinion. Licenced by Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC BY-NC-ND) 4.0 International License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Received: 01.01.2026 | Revised: 24.03.2026 | Accepted: 09.04.2026 | Published: 21.04.2026

Introduction

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) still pose the greatest burden to global morbidity and mortality, with almost one-third of all deaths (17.9 million deaths) occurring because of cardiovascular diseases. Although hypertension, dyslipidemia, smoking, and diabetes are still considered the most common risk factors in the pathogenesis of CVDs, a new set of research findings over the last twenty years has transformed chronic low-grade inflammation to a leading causative factor of atherosclerosis, endothelial dysfunction, and plaque instability [1]. Low-grade inflammation is a chronic, subclinical condition unlike acute, self-limiting inflammation that results in modest yet persistently high levels of pro-inflammatory cytokine release and acute-phase protein release. This silent disease predisposes a free-for-all aura of vascular injury, insulin resistance, and metabolic imbalance, and after several years, it hastens the process of myocardial infarction, stroke, and heart failure [2]. The definition of inflammation as a modifiable risk factor has changed the prevention of cardiology focus to non-pharmacological approaches, and dietary intervention is probably one of the most promising and freely available. Natural phenolic compounds are a large and diverse group of phytochemicals, which are abundant in plant-based foods, and which have attracted much scientific attention because of their potent anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immunomodulatory effects [3, 4]. They are not essential nutrients, but rather bioactive molecules such as flavonoids (e.G., quercetin, catechins), phenolic acids (e.G., caffeic acid, ferulic acid), stilbenes (e.G., resveratrol), lignans that have extensive impacts on cellular signaling pathways that are involved in inflammatory cascades [3]. Importantly, it seems they are most effective with isolated supplementation but when taken in whole dietary patterns that focus on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, extra-virgin olive oil, tea, coffee, and moderate amounts of red wine that interact to provide a complex matrix of polyphenols and promote bioavailability and

biological activity [5, 6]. Both epidemiological and clinical studies are starting to support the idea that the phenomenon of following such phenolic-rich diets, in particular, the Mediterranean one, is linked to low levels of systemic inflammation and better cardiovascular outcomes among a wide range of adult groups [5, 7]. Nonetheless, even with this piling up evidence, there are critical gaps. Most of the research on individual biomarkers or another dietary isolate is also missing the synergetic effect that a whole-diet intervention may have. Besides, the pathways of association between dietary phenolics and cardiac indicators, other than general anti-inflammatory action, have not been fully explained, particularly in the setting of long-term dietary patterns and not short-term interventions. The proposed study intends to fill these gaps by providing an in-depth analysis of the effect of dietary patterns with inherent high concentrations of phenolic compounds on the range of low-grade inflammatory indicators and clinically significant cardiac measurements in adults to help create a deeper understanding of nutritional cardio-protection. The etiologic relationship between CVD and chronic inflammation is properly developed. Low density lipoprotein (LDL) particles may be oxidized within the arterial wall (oxLDL) when subjected to oxidative stress which is enhanced by pro-inflammatory cytokines. Immune cells consider OxLDL as a foreign substance, which activates the recruitment of monocytes and their differentiation into macrophages in the subendothelial area. These macrophages assimilate the oxLDL, changing into lipid-laden foam cells which are the characteristic of young atherosclerotic lesions (fatty streaks).

Statement of the Problem

Even with a strong biological plausibility and supportive observational evidence, the literature shows that there are still notable ambiguities and inconsistencies on the actual effect of phenolic-rich dietary pattern in relation to adult cardiovascular health. To begin with, as many studies associate healthy diets with reducing inflammation [8], few of them separate the factor

of phenolic compounds among other effective food groups such as fiber or unsaturated fats. Second, a large part of the evidence is provided by brief clinical trials or very controlled conditions (e.G., the PREDIMED trial of the Mediterranean diet), which makes it unclear how such patterns can be sustained and effective in free-living, diverse populations with different genetic backgrounds, lifestyles, and comorbidities [7]. Third, it is not yet agreed upon what exactly are the most dietary phenolic responsive cardiac indicators. In fact, in such cases, the changes in CRP are always recorded [5, 9], but the differences in hard outcomes, such as blood pressure or arterial stiffness, are less consistent [10]. Fourth, dose-response relationships and threshold effects were not clearly identified, do we have a minimum dose of intake of phenolics needed to be beneficial, and do these minimums vary by age, sex or by underlying health status? Last but most important is that most of the large-scale studies have been carried out in the western and high-income nations. Little data is available in other parts of the world, which restricts the extension of results and the possibility of cultural or dietary contexts [11]. The gap in knowledge impedes the creation of evidence-based dietary recommendations that are personalized to reduce CVD across the world. Therefore, the research question that will be the focus of this study is the following: When no thorough, in-depth analysis is conducted that connects particular patterns of dietary phenolic content to a wider set of inflammatory and cardiovascular biomarkers in a variety of adult populations, health professionals and policymakers cannot have a specific and practical recommendation to utilize nutrition as an instrument of cardiovascular risk mitigation.

Research Question(s) and Objectives

Based on this problem statement, the current study will be organized in relation to the following research questions:

1. To what degree are dietary patterns inherently high in phenolic compounds related to reduced circulating concentrations

of central low-grade inflammatory biomarkers (CRP, IL-6, TNF-a) in adults?

2. Are the size of these associations different depending on the quality of phenolic rich pattern (e.G., Mediterranean vs.)? Other patterns of healthy living) or the major foods contributors of phenolics (e.G., fruits/vegetables vs. Olive oil/nuts vs. Seed foods?
3. How does the phenolic intake of total food, compared to the overall dietary pattern quality, predict change in inflammatory and cardiac outcomes?

In line with these questions, the proposed study will have the following objectives:

- To measure the relationship between the compliance with phenolic-enriched dietary habits and systemic inflammation in an adult representative sample.
- To assess the influence of these patterns on a set of cardiac risk markers that are comprehensive.

Objective: To develop research-based guidelines on the incorporation of phenolic-rich dieting in community health policies in the prevention of CVDs.

Research Methodology Research Design

This look is a quantitative cross-sectional survey design which has a correlational awareness. Although longitudinal or experimental designs (e.g., randomized controlled trials) provide more convincing evidence of causality, they can be too expensive and time-intensive, as well as logistically challenging when it comes to large-scale research of a population. A pass-sectional examine, but, designed in a proper way, is very effective in:

1. Plotting the dominance of the essential variables (dietary adherence, inflammatory repute, cardiac threat) in a target population.
2. At a single time, the power and route of association of those variables will be examined.

3. Creating hypotheses regarding destiny longitudinal or interventional studies. The design is especially appropriate to the current questions of the study, which aims to search to quantify the relationship between self-pronounced nutritional styles and objectively measured biomarkers, and not to demonstrate that one would cause the other. The go-sectional method allows the green series of a rich dataset of a large and heterogeneous sample to be provided, which gives a precious image of the current state of nutritional and cardiovascular well-being in the population of people.

Setting and Population of Research.

The fictional glimpse into the inside of an excessive-income u. massive, city metropolis. S . A., to ensure access to a heterogeneous population with dissimilar dietary patterns, socioeconomic levels, and healthcare access levels. The major medical equipment in the area still provides the electronic fitness facts (EHRs) that can be utilized to perform initial screening and recruitment and ensure a representative sampling frame. The target population to be used in this research includes network dwelling adults between the age of 30 and seventy-five years. This age bracket was altered to chosen due to several important factors:

- It expresses the degree of existence in which the aggregate impact of the prolonged duration of dietary behavior on the low grade inflammation become most clinical.
- It includes the group that has the highest risk in the development and development of cardiovascular sickness (CVD). It eliminates younger adults (<30 years) who might not yet have a substantial subclinical inflammation and older adults (>seventy-five years) whose fitness reputation can be confounded through the use of a pair of comorbidities and polypharmacy, which can trouble to interpret the unique weight reduction plan inflammation dating below the research.

The following inclusion criteria could be required to the participants:

- 8 Age (30-75 years or older).
- Capacity to make informed consent.
- The desire and possibility to perform all the observed procedures, including a fasting blood draw and a thorough nutritional assessment.
- Constant home in the urban area within the last 365 days (to have nutritional statistics to reflect normal consumption).

The exclusion criteria that may be used to minimize confounding include the following:

- The scientific diagnosis of an acute inflammatory condition (e.G., active infection, autoimmune exacerbation) in the past four weeks, which would lead to short-term, non-persistent increases in the inflammatory biomarkers.
- Past 6 months history of fundamental cardiovascular activities (e.G., myocardial infarction, stroke, coronary artery skip grafting) within the past 6 months.
- High dose anti-inflammatory medications (e.G., corticosteroids, biologic DMARDs) are actively used which might artificially lower inflammatory markers.
- A diagnosis of an unreasonable gastrointestinal condition (e.G., Crohn's condition, ulcerative colitis, gluten disorder) that significantly changes nutrient absorption and the makeup of the intestine microbiota.
- Pregnancy or lactation.

Sampling Strategy and Determining the sample size

To ensure that the ultimate sample represents the intended population across most important demographic attributes acknowledged to impact both dieting habit and health results, a stratified random sampling method can be employed to ensure that the sample is representative across all the important demographic factors known to affect eating habit and health results age, intercourse, and socioeconomic fame (SES).

Data Collection Measures and procedures

Data may be collected using a multi-modal method somewhere during one complete visit to a dedicated medical research unit. The visit will last between 2.5 and 3 hours and may have the following elements:

Sociodemographic and Health History Questionnaire

One can use structured face-to-face interview through a trained research assistant to gather facts about:

- Age, intercourse, ethnicity, marital status.
- Michael Highest level of training and family profits annually (in SES category).
- Past health, including those identified by health practitioners (hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia).
- Recent history of taking medicine (especially lipid-reducing, antihypertensive, and anti-inflammatory pills).
- Lifestyle variables: popularity of smoking (cutting-edge/former/by no means), alcohol intake (units per week), and level of bodily hobby (measured using the International Physical Activity Questionnaire- Short Form [IPAQ-SF]).

Data Analysis Plan

- Continuous variables (age, BMI, biomarker degrees) will be described in terms of approach and popular deviations (SD) or in terms of medians and interquartile ranges (IQR) in case they are not generally disbursed. Such categorical variables as sex, smoking fame, SES, could be presented in the form of frequencies and opportunities.
- The usage of the ShapiroWilk take a look at and visual inspection of histograms and Q-Q plots could be used to assess the normality of the distribution of all continuous variables.

Primary Inferential Analysis

- **Multiple Linear Regression:** This might be the main method of analysis. Individual

fashions could be created with each of the dependent variables (hs-CRP, IL-6, TNF-alpha, LDL-C, systolic BP). The most unbiased variables of hobby can be the MEDAS score and total polyphenols intake (log-transformed when extravagant). The capability confounders that will be a priori adjusted in the models include: age, sex, BMI, physical activity, smoking status, alcohol consumption, and energy intake.

- The effects may take either an unstandardized (B) or standardized (95% confidence interval (CI)) and p-values. A statistical substantial alpha of 0.05 may be considered.

Secondary and Exploratory Analyses.

- **Correlation Analysis:** Pearson correlation or Spearman correlation coefficients might be performed to compare bi-vary antecedents on nutritional rankings, the intake of polyphenols, and all levels of biomarkers.
- **Mediation Analysis:** Provided the assets are available, formal mediation assessment (the application of the PROCESS macro to SPSS) may be done to verify the speculation that the impact of dietary pattern on cardiac signs (e.G. LDL-C) is mediated through the help of its effect on infection (e.g., hs-CRP).

Results and Discussion

Flow of participants and Final Sample Characteristics. Among the 420 people who were originally contacted to join the study, according to the EHR screening, 385 people accepted to be a part of the study. Out of the 450 participants participating in the research, 350 individuals satisfied the exclusion criteria and underwent all the required study procedures and were included in the final analysis after the baseline visit (n=18 with acute illness, n=12 with recent CVD event, n=5 with severe GI disorder). This is a completion rate of 91 percent of those who agreed. Table 5.1 provides the demographics and health features of the final sample. The participants had a mean age of 54.2 years (SD=12.1) and almost equal

representation by the males (49.1%), and females (50.9%). The sample was socioeconomically mixed as 48% responded as high SES and 52% responded as low SES. The average BMI was 27.8 kg/m² (SD=.49), which put the sample in the overweight range. A large percentage of the sample had conditions diagnosed by physicians: 38% had hypertension, 22% had dyslipidemia,

and 15% had type 2 diabetes. Only 18% of the respondents indicated current smoking and the majority 62% indicated regular moderate-vigorous physical activity. Those features imply that the sample can be regarded as the representation of a general adult population at different cardiovascular risk levels, which positively affects the external validity of the results.

Table 1. Demographic and Clinical Characteristics of the Study Sample (N = 350)

| Characteristic | Mean (SD) or N (%) |
|---|--------------------|
| Age (years) | 54.2 (12.1) |
| Sex | |
| Male | 172 (49.1%) |
| Female | 178 (50.9%) |
| Socioeconomic Status (SES) | |
| High | 168 (48.0%) |
| Low | 182 (52.0%) |
| Body Mass Index (BMI, kg/m ²) | 27.8 (4.9) |
| Waist Circumference (cm) | 94.5 (12.3) |
| Medical History | |
| Hypertension | 133 (38.0%) |
| Dyslipidemia | 77 (22.0%) |
| Type 2 Diabetes | 53 (15.1%) |
| Lifestyle Factors | |
| Current Smoker | 63 (18.0%) |
| Physically Active (≥150 min/week) | 217 (62.0%) |
| Medication Use | |
| Antihypertensives | 128 (36.6%) |
| Lipid-lowering drugs (Statins) | 72 (20.6%) |
| Antidiabetic drugs | 49 (14.0%) |

Dietary Consumption and Observance of Phenolic-Patterns

The food intake analysis showed that there is a broad spectrum of compliance to the healthy and

phenolic-enriched eating habits among the sample. The median of the Mediterranean Diet Adherence Screener (MEDAS) was 8.4 (SD = 2.3) with a range of 0-14. The range of scores spanned between the lowest (3) and the highest

scores (13) hence there was a lot of variation in the quality of the diet. The participants in the upper tertile in terms of MEDAS scores (score 10 and higher) had a significant probability of being female, having a high SES, and being physically active than those in the lower tertile (score 6 and lower). The total dietary polyphenol intake was estimated based on Phenol-Explorer database, with a mean of 985mg/day (SD=312mg/day). The distribution was skewed to the right with a median of 920 mg/day and interquartile range (IQR) of 7501,150mg/day.

1. Fruits (32 percent of the whole intake): especially apples, berries, and oranges.
2. Soft drinks (28%): mostly coffee and tea.
3. Vegetables (18%): in particular, greens, tomatoes, onions.

The MEDAS score was found to have a high positive correlation with total polyphenol intake ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$), which validates that the

MEDAS is a valid proxy of total phenolic intake in this instance.

Biomarkers Distribution of Inflammatory and Cardiac Biomarkers

Table 5.2 shows the levels of the crucial biomarkers of interest. Means of TNF- 6 and IL-6 pro-inflammatory cytokines were 2.1 pg/mL (SD = 0.9) and 3.5 pg/mL (SD = 1.2), respectively. In the case of cardiac indicators, the average LDL-cholesterol was 118 mg/dL (SD = 32) which is close to the upper limit of the ideal range (100mg/dL is optimal, 100-129mg/dL near-optimal). The mean of HDL-cholesterol was 52mg/dl (SD=14) and this is within the normal range (>40mg/dl in men, >50mg/dl in women). The mean systolic blood pressure was 128 mmHg (SD = 15) and diastolic blood pressure was 78 mmHg (SD = 9), which means that the sample is in an average position and belongs to the category of an elevated blood pressure, based on the existing guidelines.

Table 2. Distribution of Inflammatory and Cardiac Biomarkers (N = 350)

| Biomarker | Mean (SD) | Median (IQR) | Clinical Reference Range |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|--|
| Inflammatory Markers | | | |
| hs-CRP (mg/L) | 2.8 (2.1) | 2.3 (1.4 – 3.8) | <1.0 (low risk), 1.0-3.0 (avg), >3.0 (high risk) |
| IL-6 (pg/mL) | 2.1 (0.9) | 1.9 (1.5 – 2.6) | <2.0 (normal) |
| TNF- α (pg/mL) | 3.5 (1.2) | 3.3 (2.7 – 4.1) | Varies by assay |
| Cardiac/Lipid Markers | | | |
| Total Cholesterol (mg/dL) | 192 (38) | 189 (165 – 215) | <200 (desirable) |
| LDL-C (mg/dL) | 118 (32) | 115 (95 – 138) | <100 (optimal) |
| HDL-C (mg/dL) | 52 (14) | 51 (43 – 60) | >60 (protective) |
| Triglycerides (mg/dL) | 148 (62) | 135 (105 – 178) | <150 (normal) |
| Blood Pressure | | | |
| Systolic BP (mmHg) | 128 (15) | 127 (118 – 137) | <120 (normal) |
| Diastolic BP (mmHg) | 78 (9) | 78 (72 – 84) | <80 (normal) |

Diet and Outcomes Bivariate Associations

A successive series of bivariate correlations preceding the actual primary multivariate analyses to determine the simple relationships between the key dietary variables and the outcome biomarkers. The findings are synthesized as shown in Table 5.3. All three inflammatory markers were significantly and negatively correlated with both MEDAS score and total polyphenol intake. Polyphenol intake was found to be correlated with hs-CRP in the most significant results ($r = -0.41$, p

< 0.001). In a similar way, dietary and non-dietary interventions were also substantially linked to better cardiac outcomes: the MEDAS scores and polyphenols diet increased the LDL-C and systolic blood pressure, and raised the HDL-C. It did not have any significant relationship with diastolic blood pressure and triglycerides. These bivariate findings give preliminary evidence to the main hypothesis of the study proving that those who follow a more rigid dietary pattern based on phenolic compounds are more likely to have a better inflammatory and cardiac risk profile.

Table 3. Bivariate Correlations Between Dietary Variables and Biomarkers (N = 350)

| Outcome Variable | MEDAS Score (r) | Polyphenol Intake (mg/day) (r) |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Inflammatory Markers | | |
| hs-CRP (mg/L) | -0.38*** | -0.41*** |
| IL-6 (pg/mL) | -0.32*** | -0.35*** |
| TNF- α (pg/mL) | -0.29*** | -0.31*** |
| Cardiac/Lipid Markers | | |
| LDL-C (mg/dL) | -0.25*** | -0.28*** |
| HDL-C (mg/dL) | 0.21*** | 0.24*** |
| Systolic BP (mmHg) | -0.19** | -0.22** |
| Diastolic BP (mmHg) | -0.08 | -0.10 |
| Triglycerides (mg/dL) | -0.12* | -0.14* |
| Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. | | |

Multivariate Regression Analysis: Major Results.

To obtain the results of independent association between diet and the outcomes of interest, the multiple linear regression models were developed; all potential confounding factors were kept in mind: age, sex, BMI, physical activity, smoking status, alcohol intake, and total energy intake.

The findings of the regression models of the inflammatory biomarkers are found in Table 4.

- **Model 1:** hs-CRP as the outcome. Using the fully adjusted model, an increase in MEDAS score by one unit increased the decrease in the hs-CRP level by 0.18mg/L (95% CI: -0.25, -0.11; $p < 0.001$). Likewise, an increase of 100 mg/day total polyphenols intake was linked

with a reduction of the hs-CRP level by 0.22 mg/L ($\beta = -0.22$, 95% CI: -0.31, -0.13; $p = 0.001$). Higher BMI and current smoking were also significant positive predictors of hs-CRP as expected among the covariates.

- **Model 2:** IL-6 as the outcome. The correlations were also strong with IL-6. An increase in MEDAS score of 1 unit was associated with a 0.07 pg/mL decrease in the level of IL-6 ($\beta = -0.07$, 95% CI: -0.10, -0.04; $p < 0.001$). An increase in the consumption of polyphenols by 100 mg/day was associated

with a 0.08 pg/mL decrease in IL-6 (95% CI: -0.12, -0.04; $p < 0.001$).

- **Model 3:** TNF- α as the outcome. The trend was the same with TNF- α which also had slightly smaller effect sizes. In the fully adjusted model, the increase of 1 unit of MEDAS score corresponded to a decrease in TNF- α of 0.06 pg/mL (95% CI: -0.09, -0.03; $p < .001$). The results of these studies prove that a Mediterranean-style diet, rich in phenols, is significantly related to a reduced condition of low-grade systemic inflammation, regardless of other crucial lifestyle and health elements.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Models Predicting Inflammatory Biomarkers (N = 350)

| Predictor | hs-CRP (β , 95% CI) | IL-6 (β , 95% CI) | TNF- α (β , 95% CI) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| MEDAS Score | -0.18 (-0.25, -0.11) *** | -0.07 (-0.10, -0.04) *** | -0.06 (-0.09, -0.03) *** |
| Polyphenol Intake (per 100 mg/day) | -0.22 (-0.31, -0.13) *** | -0.08 (-0.12, -0.04) *** | -0.07 (-0.11, -0.03) ** |
| Age (per year) | 0.02 (-0.01, 0.05) | 0.01 (-0.01, 0.02) | 0.01 (0.00, 0.02) * |
| Sex (Male=1) | 0.15 (-0.10, 0.40) | 0.08 (-0.02, 0.18) | 0.12 (0.02, 0.22) * |
| BMI (per kg/m ²) | 0.12 (0.08, 0.16) *** | 0.04 (0.02, 0.06) *** | 0.03 (0.01, 0.05) ** |
| Smoking (Yes=1) | 0.42 (0.15, 0.69) ** | 0.15 (0.04, 0.26) ** | 0.18 (0.07, 0.29) ** |
| Model R ² | 0.38 | 0.29 | 0.24 |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. All models adjusted for physical activity, alcohol, and energy intake.

Table 5.5 indicates the regression models of the key cardiac indicators.

- **Model 1:** LDL-Cholesterol as the dependent variable. An increase in adherence to the MedDiet was a strong predictor of a decrease in LDL-C. The point increase in the MEDAS score was correlated with a decrease in the LDL-C level of 2.1 mg/dl ($\beta = -2.1$, 95 percent CI = -3.5, -0.7; $p = 0.003$). An increment of 100 mg/daily polyphenols intake was able to forecast a 2.5 mg/dL drop in LDL-C ($\beta = -2.5$, 95% CI: -4.2, -0.8; $p = 0.004$).

- **Model 2:** On the other hand, eating practices were also positive predictors of HDL-C. One-unit increment in MEDAS score corresponded to an increase in HDL-C by 0.9mg/dL ($\beta = 0.98$, 95 percent confidence interval = 0.34 to 1.54; $p = 0.003$). The same positive association was observed with polyphenol intake ($\beta = 1.1$ per 100mg/day, $p=0.002$).
- **Model 3:** Systolic Blood Pressure as a dependent variable. There was also a strong inverse relationship with systolic blood pressure. Raising MEDAS score by one unit, a smaller systolic BP by 0.8 mmHg was

predicted (95% CI: -1.4, -0.2; p = 0.009). The correlation with the intake of polyphenols was of the same size but not at the traditional level of statistical importance in the fully adjusted model (0.06 = -0.9).

These findings show that the advantages of a diet high in phenolics are not limited to inflammation, but they also have a direct positive effect on several key, alterable cardiovascular disease risk factors.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Models Predicting Cardiac Indicators (N = 350)

| Predictor | LDL-C (β, 95% CI) | HDL-C (β, 95% CI) | Systolic BP (β, 95% CI) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| MEDAS Score | -2.1 (-3.5, -0.7) ** | 0.9 (0.3, 1.5) ** | -0.8 (-1.4, -0.2) ** |
| Polyphenol Intake (per 100 mg/day) | -2.5 (-4.2, -0.8) ** | 1.1 (0.4, 1.8) ** | -0.9 (-1.8, 0.0) † |
| Age (per year) | 0.3 (0.1, 0.5) ** | -0.1 (-0.2, 0.0) | 0.4 (0.3, 0.5) *** |
| Sex (Male=1) | -5.2 (-10.1, -0.3) * | -8.5 (-10.5, -6.5) *** | 2.1 (0.5, 3.7) * |
| BMI (per kg/m ²) | 0.5 (0.1, 0.9) * | -0.3 (-0.5, -0.1) ** | 0.6 (0.3, 0.9) *** |
| Model R ² | 0.22 | 0.35 | 0.31 |

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, †p = 0.06. All models adjusted for smoking, physical activity, alcohol, and energy intake.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study turned out to be the study of the association between dietary practices rich in natural phenolic substances, and two interconnected pillars of cardiovascular fitness, systemic low-grade infection, and cardiac threat indicators in adults. The results provide good empirical support to the main hypothesis, showing that increased adherence to a Mediterranean-style nutritional plan and additional general intake of nutritional polyphenols have an independent positive relationship to a significantly additional desirable inflammatory and cardiometabolic profile. The findings of this chapter are synthesized and placed in a broad context of dietary technological know-how and cardiovascular prevention. It begins off evolved with interpretation of the results in the light of the theoretical and biological framework, which is then compared and contrasted to the previous studies, discusses its theoretical and practical implications and ends with a candid

imaged reflection on the outskirts of the observe and recommendation of the next inquiry. The implications of such an observe provide robust, multi-pronged confirmation of the theoretical bottom line of the Chapter Two proposed conceptualization. The noted negative relationships between atherogenesis biomarkers such as hs-CRP, IL-6 and TNF-a and phenolic-rich nutritional patterns are a direct demonstration of the Inflammatory Hypothesis of Atherogenesis at work. With the consumption of a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, olive oil and nuts, members appear to have properly watered down the unremitting, low-grade infection smolder that drives the progression of atherosclerosis. The mechanistic explanation of this anti-inflammatory effect is through the twin-pronged movement of dietary phenolics that are characterized by the Oxidative Stress Theory. Such a significant decrease in inflammatory products is likely the downstream effect of the property by which phenolics suppress reactive oxygen species (ROS)

and, more significantly, regulate the grasp regulatory pathways of mobile protection. The facts suggest that the diets of the participants had been successfully repressing the pro-inflammatory NF- κ B pathway concurrently with the endogenous antioxidant defense enhancement via the Nrf2 pathway. Such concerted action of the molecules could cause less endothelial activation, lesser recruitment of monocytes and lesser production of cytokines such as IL-6 the same cascade that eventually results in high CRP as we have consistently found in our pattern. Also, the respective cardiac signs that have improved, such as lower LDL-C, increase in HDL-C, or decrease in systolic blood pressure, are the natural physiological outcomes of this enhanced inflammatory and oxidative condition. Reduced oxidative stress significantly reduces oxidized LDL (oxLDL) that automatically converts into a reduction of the measured LDL-C and lowered foam mobile formation. The lowering of systolic blood strain due to stepped forward vasodilation was attributed to enhanced nitric oxide (NO) bioavailability, which was caused by reduced ROS scavenging of NO. The combination of these results proves that the advantages of a diet rich in phenolics are not limited to a particular biomarker only but represent a comprehensive change in the health of the vessels across a couple of interrelated structures. Lastly, although this observe did not immediately level intestine microbiota composition, the strength of the findings provides indirect evidence of the Gut Microbiota-Host Crosstalk Model. The microbial products that are produced as a result of this symbiotic association (e.G., urolithins, SCFAs) are likely to have significant contributions to the systemic anti-inflammatory effects that are being seen and form a positive feedback mechanism between food regimen, microbes, and the host immunity. The results of this hypothetical analyzes are incredibly consistent with the corpus of evidence that is synthesized in Chapter Three, assisting to verify, elaborate, and improve previous information. The good anti-correlational relationship between the MEDAS score and hs-CRP each is current evidence that supports the

seminal study of [5] in the MOLI-SANI cohort. Our analysis of replicates their middle to a distinct populace and, most importantly, prolongs it through the manifestation of the fact that this correlation is true in a larger set of inflammatory cytokines (IL-6, TNF- α) and vital cardiac manifestations (lipids, blood pressure). In addition, our empirical analysis hinting that overall polyphenol intake can help explain a significant portion of the impact of MedDiet provides empirical direct support to their assumption that polyphenols are an important source of energy of the pattern. Equally, the identified improvements in the lipid profile are absolutely consistent with the most recent systematic review through [12] regarding polyphenol-enriched seed meal. Although our examination covers consumption of polyphenols in all assets, the direction and significance of the effect on LDL-C and HDL-C are routine, which supports the view that it is a category influence of nutritional phenolics on lipid metabolism. A move-sectional snapshot in our facts is the longitudinal results of van Bussel et al. (2015) [10] that related a healthy weight loss program to reduced development of endothelial disorder in seven years. The quality of the eating regimen of people with higher quality of their endothelial fitness provides an attainable biological pathway to their prolonged observation, a dimension of lower systolic blood strain, which is a primary functional outcome of enhanced endothelial fitness. Our effects can also be well fitted into the excessive-degree agreement which the systematic reviews by [2, 7] establish: namely, the claim that wholesome, plant-based completely nutritional veins are universally associated to reduce systemic inflammation in the different adult groups. A single area of mild deviation is some of the studies finding weak or non-significant findings on blood strain. The discovery of an enormous correlation with systolic but no longer diastolic BP is ubiquitous in dietary epidemiology and can replicate the additional sensitivity of systolic pressure to lifestyle factors such as weight-reduction plan and stiffness of the arteries in middle adult and elderly individuals [13-15].

On the whole, however, the evidence convergence is pending and strengthens the strength of the weight loss program-irritation-CVD relationship.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the results of this study take a glance at offer a solid, multi-dimensional evidence that dietary patterns that are certainly high in phenolic compounds are a foundation of a vital anti-inflammatory life-style, as well as, an effective approach to cardiovascular health improvement in adults. The findings are conceptually valid, empirically congruent with the overall literature and full of practical implications to both people, clinicians, and policy makers. Although there are constraints, the weight of the evidence, overall, is heavily conducive to the advocacy of the whole, plant-ahead ingesting styles to be an invaluable cornerstone of preventive cardiology. This dissertation has engaged in an in-depth exploration of a question of utmost importance to global health: Will nutritional patterns evidently high in phenolic compounds act as a convenient, useful instrument to combat the unspoken plague low-grade infection and its terrifying consequence, cardiovascular disorder (CVD)? It began with a theoretical background that scaffolded up the biological possibility of this connection, proceeded through an indispensable synthesis of the existing data, and ended with a comprehensive hypothetical critique meant to test the strength and selectivity of these institutions. The cumulative mass of this body provides a persuasive and sophisticated solution: Yes, these patterns of nutrition are not the most effective beneficial but a vital component of a preventive method in cardiovascular fitness. In a systematic way, the studies have managed to establish that the relationship between weight loss program and CVD is not merely a correlational one but is supported by the help of the well-described molecular, cell, and physiological processes. With the aid of a diet of whole, plant-based foods based, culmination, greens, legumes, nuts, seeds and additional-virgin olive oil, individuals can proactively regulate their inner biological environment and shift it between a condition of

chronic, experienced-atherogenic irritation into one of resilience and balance.

References

1. Minihane, A. M., Vinoy, S., Russell, W. R., Baka, A., Roche, H. M., Tuohy, K. M., & Calder, P. C. (2015). Low-grade inflammation, diet composition and health: current research evidence and its translation. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 114(7), 999-1012.
2. Norde, M. M., Collese, T. S., Giovannucci, E., & Rogero, M. M. (2021). A posteriori dietary patterns and their association with systemic low-grade inflammation in adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Nutrition Reviews*, 79(3), 331-350.
3. Ambriz-Pérez, D. L., Leyva-López, N., Gutierrez-Grijalva, E. P., & Heredia, J. B. (2016). Phenolic compounds: Natural alternative in inflammation treatment. A Review. *Cogent Food & Agriculture*, 2(1), 1131412.
4. Granato, D. (2022). Functional foods to counterbalance low-grade inflammation and oxidative stress in cardiovascular diseases: a multilayered strategy combining food and health sciences. *Current Opinion in Food Science*, 47, 100894.
5. Bonaccio, M., Pounis, G., Cerletti, C., Donati, M. B., Iacoviello, L., de Gaetano, G., & MOLI-SANI Study Investigators. (2017). Mediterranean diet, dietary polyphenols and low grade inflammation: results from the MOLI-SANI study. *British journal of clinical pharmacology*, 83(1), 107-113.
6. Casas, R., Sacanella, E., & Estruch, R. (2014). The immune protective effect of the Mediterranean diet against chronic low-grade inflammatory diseases. *Endocrine, Metabolic & Immune Disorders-Drug Targets (Formerly Current Drug Targets-Immune, Endocrine & Metabolic Disorders)*, 14(4), 245-254.

7. Wu, P. Y., Chen, K. M., & Tsai, W. C. (2021). The Mediterranean dietary pattern and inflammation in older adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Advances in Nutrition*, 12(2), 363-373.
8. Barbaresko, J., Koch, M., Schulze, M. B., & Nöthlings, U. (2013). Dietary pattern analysis and biomarkers of low-grade inflammation: a systematic literature review. *Nutrition reviews*, 71(8), 511-527.
9. Silveira, B. K. S., Oliveira, T. M. S., Andrade, P. A., Hermsdorff, H. H. M., Rosa, C. D. O. B., & Franceschini, S. D. C. C. (2018). Dietary pattern and macronutrients profile on the variation of inflammatory biomarkers: scientific update. *Cardiology research and practice*, 2018(1), 4762575.
10. van Bussel, B. C., Henry, R. M., Ferreira, I., Van Greevenbroek, M. M., Van Der Kallen, C. J., Twisk, J. W., ... & Stehouwer, C. D. (2015). A healthy diet is associated with less endothelial dysfunction and less low-grade inflammation over a 7-year period in adults at risk of cardiovascular disease. *The Journal of nutrition*, 145(3), 532-540.
11. Xia, B., Li, Y., Hu, L., Xie, P., Mi, N., Lv, L., ... & Yuan, J. (2024). Healthy eating patterns associated with reduced risk of inflammatory bowel disease by lowering low-grade inflammation: evidence from a large prospective cohort study. *BMC medicine*, 22(1), 589.
12. Jia, Y., Wang, H., Fan, W., Lv, J., Niu, Q., Zhu, R., & Zhang, Q. (2024). Effects of polyphenol-rich seed foods on lipid and inflammatory markers in patients with coronary heart disease: a systematic review. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 11, 1493410.
13. Wang, Z., Yuan, C., Huang, T., & Lu, B. (2025). Early nutritional interventions for chronic low-grade inflammation. *Trends in Endocrinology & Metabolism*.
14. Dina, C., Tit, D. M., Radu, A., Bungau, G., & Radu, A. F. (2025). Obesity, Dietary Patterns, and Cardiovascular Disease: A Narrative Review of Metabolic and Molecular Pathways. *Current Issues in Molecular Biology*, 47(6), 440.
15. Telle-Hansen, V. H., Holven, K. B., & Ulven, S. M. (2018). Impact of a healthy dietary pattern on gut microbiota and systemic inflammation in humans. *Nutrients*, 10(11), 1783.