



Dietary Differences among Women of Polish Descent in the United States by Country of Birth and Level of Education

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ABSTRACT Changes in breast cancer, gastric cancer and coronary arterial disease among people of Polish descent after migration to the United States suggest there may be potentially modifiable factors affecting incidence of these diseases. The objective of this analysis was to examine the role of education on dietary intake in Polish-born and U.S.-born women of Polish descent. Women of Polish descent (n=396), ages 17-81 were selected from Polish women's social organizations. Women completed a modified Health Habits and History Questionnaire. Participants were stratified for the analysis by country of birth and level of education. The average daily intake of nutrients, food components and food groups, was assessed using multiple linear regression. These were compared for women by country of birth and level of education. The greatest number of statistically significant differences in nutrient and food group intakes by birthplace was between the two groups of Polish descent women with lower education. Fewer differences were noted in women with college education. Less educated women born in Poland tended to higher intakes of nutrients considered protective against chronic diseases, indicating perhaps a protective effect of their lower acculturation on dietary intake. In conclusion, it can be stated that less educated women from Poland were less likely to have dietary acculturation after migration to the United States. There are significant dietary differences among women of Polish descent that vary by education and birthplace. Women with diets placing them at higher risk for cancers and cardiovascular disease should be targeted for interventions to lower their risk.

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