

## **OP32.4**

### **How can GPs counsel vegetarian and vegan patients?**

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**Background & Aim:** for ethnical and health reasons more and more people decide to adopt a vegetarian or vegan diet. in everyday practice, GPs should have good knowledge about how to counsel vegetarian and vegan patients.

**Methods:** Literature review.

**Results:** Many studies show the benefits of these diets as long as they are well-planned. Vegetarians have a higher intake of vegetable, fruit, legumes and fibres. They consume less calories, saturated fat and cholesterol compared to non-vegetarians. As a result, vegetarians seem to have a lower risk for chronic diseases such as ischemic heart disease, type 2 diabetes and overall cancer. On the other hand the risk of Vitamin B12 deficiency increases over time of adopting a vegetarian/vegan diet. Moreover the adequate intakes of iron, iodine, calcium and zinc have to be assured especially during pregnancy, lactation and childhood.

**Conclusions:** in future consultations GPs have to be aware of the possible deficiencies and should be able to use the adequate diagnostic tests in order to advise their patients on a healthy vegetarian diet for all stages of life including pregnancy and childhood.