

Study shows global need to produce more fruits and vegetables

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The global supply of fruits and vegetables falls short of the needs of the population, according to a study by researchers at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health.

Low fruit and [vegetable intake](#) is a leading risk factor for death and

disability globally and is attributed to approximately 1.7 million annual deaths worldwide. With current global dietary guidelines recommending a daily fruit and vegetable consumption of at least five servings, researchers analyzed whether the supply of fruits and vegetables is sufficient to meet current and growing population needs.

"There is a strong relationship between higher fruit and [vegetable consumption](#) and lower mortality," says Karen Siegel, MPH, in the Hubert Department of Global Health at Rollins School of Public Health. "This relationship extends to major chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and certain cancers. Although much of the world's population does not consume the recommended servings, if health professionals are to encourage these recommendations, we must also consider the shortage of supply."

Using [global population](#) and agriculture databases, the team compared the [global supply](#) of fruits and vegetables (supply) with the recommended dietary intake (demand) for the year 2012. They also projected the supply and demand for 2025 and 2050.

Findings suggest that the global supply of fruits and vegetables falls 22 percent short of the global population's needs and approximately 95 percent short in lower income countries. An estimated fruit and vegetable supply gap of 34 percent and 43 percent was projected for years 2025 and 2050 respectively, if current production levels remain constant.

"Our research is significant because it shows that these gaps may only worsen with time, particularly for low-income countries," K.M. Venkat Narayan, MD, Ruth and O.C. Hubert Chair of Global Health at Rollins School of Public Health and study co-author. "This information sets the stage for further analyses and a deeper look into policy levels for increasing production and supply. Change is possible."

The complete study is available in the August 6, 2014 edition of *PLOS ONE*.

Provided by Emory University

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