# High Omega-6 to Omega-3 Ratio Linked to Increased Health Risks, Study Finds



A recent study published in April in the journal eLife by Yuchen Zhang, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia's College of Public Health, has highlighted the potential health risks associated with a high omega-6 to omega-3 ratio. According to the research, a higher ratio may increase the risk of early death, including deaths from cancer and heart disease.

The study utilized data from the UK Biobank, which includes health outcomes for more than 500,000 individuals aged between 40 and 69. Participants provided plasma samples and dietary information from 2007 to 2010, and their health was followed for nearly 13 years. The findings indicated that participants with the highest omega-6 to omega-3 ratios had a 26% increased risk of dying from any cause, a 14% higher likelihood of dying from cancer, and a 31% greater risk of dying from heart disease compared to those with lower ratios.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines, as well as in flaxseed, walnuts, and chia seeds, and contribute significantly to heart, lung, and immune system health. Omega-6 fatty acids, prevalent in nuts, seeds, and various oils, are also beneficial but can be harmful in excessive amounts.

Experts like Dr. Lauren R. Sastre of East Carolina University and registered dietitian Kristin Kirkpatrick of the Cleveland Clinic have cautioned that the study shows correlation rather than causation and have highlighted the need for a balanced intake of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. This balance is crucial for controlling inflammation and maintaining overall health.