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Brain reserve – a nutritional perspective

Itay Shafat

Food Engineering and Biotechnology from the Technion, Israel

One of the most important macro trends affecting the national space is the global aging of the population. People from almost every nation, females and males, age at a rapid pace, Europe being in the forefront of the trend. As the population ages, concepts such as “healthy aging” (adding healthy, free from chronic ailments normally affecting the elderly, years to our longevity) and “successful aging” (a bit more subjective but generally describing having meaningful lives) are coming into discussion. One of the most important aspects of health or successful aging is one’s cognitive health. Cognitive capabilities tend to decline with age, either as part of the natural age process or due to pathology, a decline which may have significant effect on the quality of life of the affected individual. Humans have not been very successful at treating cognitive decline. This is evident from the lack of successful pharmaceuticals aimed at treating ailments such as Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. As with many other ailments, prevention may be a better option than treatment. When considering the issue of cognitive decline, one prevention option is to increase one’s brain reserve. Brain reserve is a term that reflects certain properties of the brain that can prevent or reduce loss of cognitive function despite substantial loss of brain material that can happen as we age. How to build one’s brain reserve? There are many factors to building one’s brain reserve, including leaving a healthy lifestyle, being socially active and more. Can certain foods or nutraceuticals help in building brain reserve and reduce risks of cognitive decline? We will discuss all these questions during the presentation, and will discuss what evidence exist, and what does not, in addressing the dire need of helping people, especially in the face of the aging population, to build their brain reserves.

Biography

Itay Shafat has long experience in companies, small and global, developing clinically proven ingredients shown to cognitive function. Dr. Shafat holds his Ph.D. from the School of Medicine, Technion, Israel, and M.Sc. in Food Engineering and Biotechnology from the Technion, Israel. Dr. Shafat has extensive scientific background and has developed expertise in lipidomics and the impact of lipids on human health. Dr. Shafat is the author and co-author of several scientific papers and book chapters.