

An Investigation Into the Impact of Diet and Lifestyle on the Management of Lipoedema

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Objectives: Lipoedema is a chronic fat disorder involving an excessive abnormal deposition of subcutaneous fat in the thighs, legs, hips and buttocks mainly (Wounds UK, 2017). The importance of healthy eating in lipoedema management has been recognised (Wounds UK, 2017), yet dietary guidelines specific for lipoedema are lacking (Bertsch *et al.*, 2020). The study aimed to investigate the self-reported dietary and lifestyle impact on lipoedema management among a representative lipoedema population in the UK.

Methods: The study used an online questionnaire that consisted of multiple-choice and open-response questions to collect data on symptoms and diagnostic status of lipoedema and self-reported dietary and lifestyle impact on lipoedema management among participants. The questionnaire was constructed using the Survey Monkey software. The active online survey link was sent to Lipoedema UK's members

and contacts via e-mail and also made accessible via the study flyer advertised on Lipoedema UK's website and newsletters. Ethical approval was obtained from the De Montfort University Faculty Research Ethics Committee of Health and Life Sciences prior to the study. Participants had given their consents before starting the survey. Data collection was anonymous. Data were analysed using SPSS v26.0.

Results: The results showed that 165 out of 257 participants (66.3%) had tried diet as a mean to improve their lipoedema symptoms in the past. Anti-inflammatory diet was reported to be one of the three most effective diets that improved their symptoms (either single or multiple). The other two diets were ketogenic diet and rare adipose disorder diet. Noticeably, 95% of the 257 participants were classified as either overweight or obese based on their Body Mass Index (BMI) measure. And 20% of the participants who tried weight loss diets had found improvements in their lipoedema conditions.

Conclusions: The study results will help inform the development of future research on finding a dietary solution to effective lipoedema management for the UK lipoedema population.

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