

## Routine fruit washing to prevent acute toxic encephalopathy

- 1 Shrivastava A, Kumar A, Thomas JD, et al. Association of acute toxic encephalopathy with litchi consumption in an outbreak in Muzaffarpur, India, 2014: a case-control study. *Lancet Glob Health* 2017; 5: e458–66.



I read with great interest the Article by Aakash Shrivastava and colleagues (January, 2017)<sup>1</sup> that reported the association of a 2014 outbreak of acute toxic encephalopathy in Muzaffarpur, India, with lychee (also spelled litchi) consumption using a case-control study. The study reported that lychee consumption 24 h before onset of symptoms was associated with acute toxic encephalopathy in 67 (65%) of 103 cases and 23 (23%) of 102 controls. The same case-control study reported that routinely washing vegetables and fruits was associated with acute toxic encephalopathy in 32 (32%) of 99 cases and 58 (70%) of 83 controls. These results suggest that routinely washing vegetables and fruits might prevent the acute toxic encephalopathy associated with lychee consumption. It suggests that chemicals or other agents on the fruits and vegetables could be associated with acute toxic encephalopathy. This study did not describe the presence of toxins or other agents on the unwashed fruit, only the hypoglycaemic agents inside the fruit. Therefore, detection of toxins inside the fruits might not totally determine lychee's association with acute toxic encephalopathy. Toxins or other agents on the unwashed fruit or vegetables might be associated with the acute toxic encephalopathy outbreak in Muzaffarpur, India, and routine washing of vegetables and fruits might prevent acute toxic encephalopathy.

I declare no competing interests.

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