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A Historical Exploration of Indian Diets and a Possible Link to Insulin Resistance Syndrome

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1 Running head: A Historical Exploration of Indian Diets

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4 Syndrome^o

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8 Manoshi Bhattacharya is a physician in private practice and an author.
9 This research has received no funding and is a part of the forthcoming book: The Great
10 Indian Diet

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12 Abstract

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14 Background: Insulin resistance syndrome, with diabetes in particular, is affecting an ever-
15 increasing proportion of India's population. The increasing consumption of low-fibre and
16 refined carbohydrates is thought to be related to the increased risk of insulin resistance
17 syndrome.

18 Aim: The aim was to study the history of eating behaviours in India, the patterns
19 (macronutrients, frequency, and quantity) of food consumption amongst ancient,
20 medieval and modern Indians, and the evolution of a primarily low-fibre and refined
21 carbohydrate diet.

22 Methods: The ancient dietary laws of India, historical documents, ancient and medieval
23 literature and poetry were studied covering a time period of more than 2000 years and
24 compared with modern diets among people of different geographical regions, faiths, and
25 social strata using USDA's National Nutritional Database for analysis.

26 Conclusions: The data presented shows a gradual shift over the centuries from a diet of
27 **large quantities of indigestible-fibre carbohydrate, small amounts of digestible**
28 **carbohydrate, moderate fat, moderate protein**, to an increasing intake of high-fibre
29 and refined carbohydrates associated with a decreasing intake of animal proteins.
30 Between 1775 and 1947, there was a shift to a frequent intake of high-fibre
31 carbohydrates. From 1947 onwards there has been an increase in the frequency of intake
32 and quantities of low-fibre and refined carbohydrates with protein intake improving only
33 marginally.

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35
36 **Introduction**

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