



Chocolate solution to a certain heart trouble

IN WELCOME news for chocolate aficionados, a new study has suggested the confectionery could be good for the heart.

People who ate more chocolate were less likely to develop a particular heart condition, says the study of more than 55,000 Danes.

The new study, published in the British medical journal *Heart*, found that moderate chocolate intake can be positively associated with lessening the risk of the heart arrhythmia condition, atrial fibrillation.

The condition affects around 8.8 million people in the European Union and is associated with a higher risk of a stroke, heart failure, cognitive decline, and dementia.

The research was conducted between 1993 and 1997 on just over 55,000 people between the ages of 50 and 64 in Denmark.

Biological materials and diet and lifestyle information were collected including a food frequency questionnaire.

The questionnaire contained 192 items and

participants were asked to fill out their daily consumption of foods including chocolate.

Their health was also recorded in follow-ups and, in total, 3,346 cases of atrial fibrillation were reported among the participants during a median of 13-and-a-half years of follow-up.

The researchers found that participants who ate either two to six servings of chocolate a week, one a week or one to three servings a month, had a lower risk of developing atrial fibrillation than those who consumed less than one piece of chocolate per month.

It is also worth noting that while participants who consumer more chocolate reported a higher level of calories consumed, they also generally had a higher level of educational attainment.

Researchers warned that possible limitations arose over the fact that other factors could be responsible for the results and called for more research into the area to further substantiate the claim. — *The Independent*