Yes, the **2025 Academy statement** was **adult-scoped** because the underlying review was adult-scoped.

1. Introduction

Yes. The 2025 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics position statement explicitly limits its claim to **adults**, stating that appropriately planned vegetarian and vegan dietary patterns can be nutritionally adequate and beneficial "in adults" (Raj et al., 2025). It also states that its aim is to inform clinicians about vegetarian and vegan dietary patterns for "different populations of nonpregnant, nonlactating adults," which directly signals that the evidentiary scope was set at adults rather than the whole life course (Raj et al., 2025). The same wording appears in the companion publication record (Raj et al., 2025).

That adult-only framing contrasts with the Academy's 2009 and 2016 position statements, which explicitly said well-planned vegetarian, including vegan, diets were appropriate across all life stages, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, and older adulthood (Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016). More recent background reviews also frequently narrowed their own inclusion criteria to adults because of limited or heterogeneous evidence outside adulthood, especially for pregnancy, lactation, childhood, and some older-adult outcomes (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Jakše, 2021). By contrast, recent pediatric reviews describe the child evidence base as limited, mixed, and still under active debate across institutions (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2023; Desmond et al., 2024).

Was the 2025 position statement on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on vegan diets limited to adults because the underlying evidence review was scoped to adults?
Requires at least 5 papers that directly answer your question. Try adjusting your query to find more papers.

FIGURE 1 Consensus on adult-only scope of the 2025 statement

The meter should be read as strongly affirmative. The 2025 statement itself defines its target population as nonpregnant, nonlactating adults, and several major supporting reviews in this corpus were likewise restricted to adult populations (Raj et al., 2025; Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Bakaloudi et al., 2020).

2. Methods

This deep search ran over more than 170 million research papers indexed in Consensus, including Semantic Scholar, PubMed, and related scholarly sources. The workflow identified 87 candidate papers after relevance filtering and deduplication, then included the top 50 most relevant papers for synthesis. The search strategy emphasized six linked aims: tracing the wording of the 2025 Academy statement, identifying the population scope of its supporting reviews, contrasting the adult-only 2025 framing with earlier Academy all-life-stage statements, and checking whether pediatric and pregnancy evidence remained sufficiently mature for broad endorsement.

Search Strategy

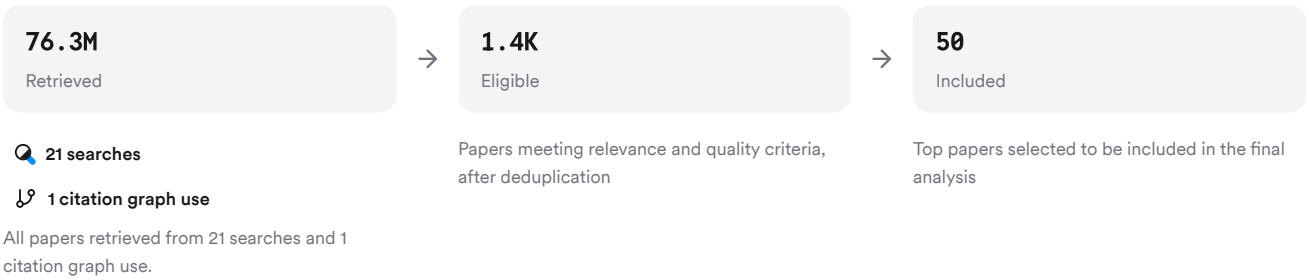

FIGURE 2 Search and screening flow for included vegan diet papers

Searches combined statement-tracing terms, population-scope terms, and comparison queries spanning adult, pediatric, pregnancy, and guideline literature.

3. Results

3.1 Key Papers

Three papers anchor the answer. The 2025 Academy position statement provides the decisive scope language, while the 2016 and 2009 Academy statements show that the adult-only wording was a substantive narrowing from prior all-life-stage positions (Raj et al., 2025; Melina et al., 2016; Craig & Mangels, 2009).

Paper	Summary
(Raj et al., 2025)	Defines scope as nonpregnant, nonlactating adults (Raj et al., 2025)
(Craig & Mangels, 2009)	Prior Academy statement covered all life stages (Melina et al., 2016)
(Freeland-Graves & Nitzke, 2013)	Earlier ADA statement also covered all life stages (Craig & Mangels, 2009)

FIGURE 3 Key papers defining scope across Academy position statements

3.2 Population Scope

The strongest direct evidence is textual: the 2025 statement's aim is restricted to nonpregnant, nonlactating adults (Raj et al., 2025). That is not just a casual description of who happened to be discussed; it is the formal scope statement for the position itself (Raj et al., 2025).

Several supporting reviews in this corpus use the same adult-centered eligibility logic. A large systematic review of plant-based diet nutrient intake included generally healthy adults aged 18 years and older and excluded pregnant and lactating women, athletes, and disease-specific populations (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021). Another systematic review on vegan diet adequacy explicitly searched for studies in European adults (Bakaloudi et al., 2020). Reviews on adult protein adequacy, adult plant-based diet definitions, adult blood pressure, adult type 2 diabetes, and adult menu modeling all similarly specify adult populations (Mariotti & Gardner, 2019; Kent et al., 2021; Lopez et al., 2019; Guest et al., 2024; Hess, 2022).

3.3 Contrast With Earlier Statements

Dimension	2009 ADA	2016 Academy	2025 Academy	Citations
Core population	All life stages	All life stages	Adults only	(Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2025)
Pregnancy/lactation	Included	Included	Excluded from stated aim	(Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2025)
Childhood/adolescence	Included	Included	Not covered by position claim	(Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2025)
Evidentiary tone	Broad endorsement	Broad endorsement	Narrower and adult-specific	(Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2025)

The key change is therefore not simply wording. The Academy moved from broad life-course appropriateness statements in 2009 and 2016 to a targeted adult statement in 2025 (Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2025).

3.4 Why Scope Narrowed

The broader literature suggests why adult scoping was methodologically defensible. Reviews focused on adults repeatedly note that they limited scope because the evidence is stronger or more current there (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Jakše, 2021). Pediatric reviews, by contrast, emphasize limited data, heterogeneous designs, and persistent controversy about safety, growth, bone outcomes, micronutrient adequacy, and supervision needs (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2023; Lotti et al., 2025; Desmond et al., 2024).

This does not mean vegan diets are impossible outside adulthood. Some organizations and earlier Academy statements support well-planned vegan diets across life stages, while European pediatric statements remain more cautious and often require close supervision (Craig et al., 2021; Desmond et al., 2024). But it does mean the 2025 Academy statement was built around the population where the review base was most explicitly assembled: adults (Raj et al., 2025; Bakaloudi et al., 2020).

Results Timeline

Vegan-diet position literature has shifted from broad endorsement to narrower population-specific framing.

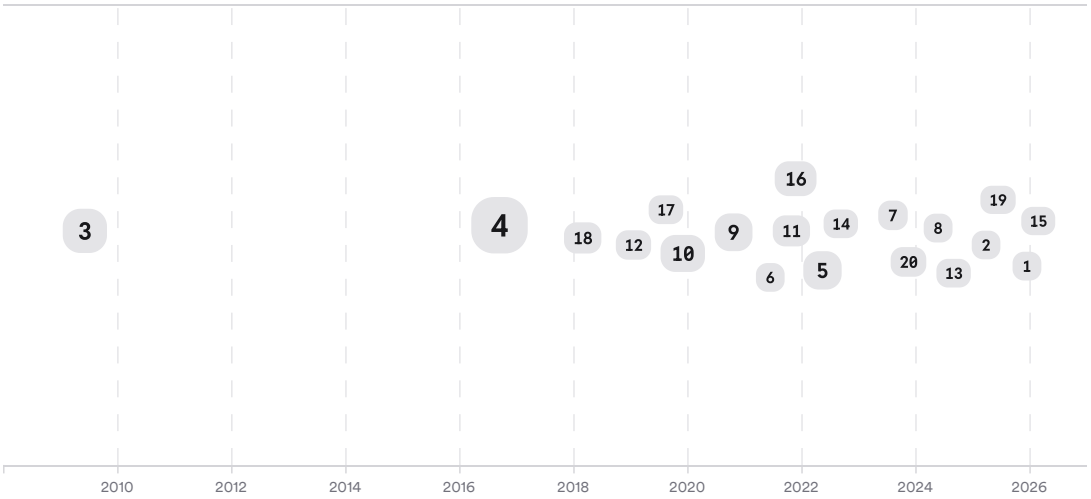

FIGURE 4 Timeline of position and review papers; larger markers indicate more citations

The arc shows early Academy statements making broad life-stage claims, followed by 2020s reviews that increasingly separate adults from children, pregnancy, and older-adult subgroups because the evidence base differs in maturity and consistency (Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016; Neufingerl & Eilander, 2023).

Top Contributors

Type	Name	Papers
Author	A. R. Mangels	[e29e7dffa51a50f79b4a8df74a8bc2cc][ba85f39d001f5c67b79214728fe4d154] [10a2de66ba6e53b8b4676e38ab36a03e][2dd09220ec50564ab59a55f8860fdf78] [9285a13977255400bd65c28e33b0ed6f][cf4c8266d3005d4e8d35a5a17828ff87]
Author	Sudha Raj	[e29e7dffa51a50f79b4a8df74a8bc2cc][ba85f39d001f5c67b79214728fe4d154] [2dd09220ec50564ab59a55f8860fdf78][7a999661bcb55f0988c05d1970f155e1]
Author	N. Guest	[e29e7dffa51a50f79b4a8df74a8bc2cc][ba85f39d001f5c67b79214728fe4d154] [2dd09220ec50564ab59a55f8860fdf78][7a999661bcb55f0988c05d1970f155e1]
Journal	*Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*	[e29e7dffa51a50f79b4a8df74a8bc2cc][ba85f39d001f5c67b79214728fe4d154] [dd764c16587759758c7b7afb6c244310][c93ed4adc8075c0ab26a47b8c34a7226] [04b48980f44157f989ae50c885dcaea9][b30b246cde825d84900a75f611a6ae95]

Type	Name	Papers
Journal	*Nutrients*	[7dd610529a47507cbec80b960c9c3027][e4a735f77df85085a9db179908762e6d] [10a2de66ba6e53b8b4676e38ab36a03e][21964368259552248c4a7c3e02a1c731] [2124d38e6ff3582bbe59405e0e1f17be][6b50c93f588857c09faa0fff1a5e02e9] [7460b6d23c7055058782466b423a6192][7f69891292275ec3a4c9824c6e87473c]
Journal	*The Journal of Nutrition*	[c2d14b9da199524d8dfa317b93f97f1a][8a1ba8957fb950a18356da8fd4df826d] [a76becf8e07d5d10b6db814248559cbe]

FIGURE 5 Authors and journals appearing most often in included papers

4. Discussion

The answer is strong because it rests first on explicit scope language in the 2025 statement itself, not on inference (Raj et al., 2025). The paper does not merely discuss adults more often than children; it formally defines its purpose around nonpregnant, nonlactating adults and states its core position only “in adults” (Raj et al., 2025). That makes the causal link between statement scope and review scope highly likely.

The surrounding evidence also supports that interpretation. Many influential reviews in this corpus were designed around adult populations, often with explicit exclusion of pregnancy, lactation, childhood, or special populations (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Bakaloudi et al., 2020; Lopez et al., 2019). At the same time, reviews focused on children and adolescents repeatedly describe thinner and more uncertain evidence, along with inconsistent recommendations across organizations (Neufingerl & Eilander, 2023; Desmond et al., 2024).

One limitation is that the corpus does not include a dedicated methodological appendix from the Academy explicitly saying, in one sentence, “we limited the position to adults because the evidence review was scoped to adults.” The conclusion therefore relies on direct scope statements plus concordant scope in the underlying review literature, rather than on an explicit process memo (Raj et al., 2025).

Claim	Evidence Strength	Reasoning	Papers
The 2025 Academy position statement is explicitly limited to adults.	Strong	Directly stated in the formal position language and aim statement.	(Raj et al., 2025)
The underlying evidence base used to support the 2025 statement was largely scoped to adult populations.	Strong	Several major systematic reviews in the corpus explicitly restricted inclusion to adults.	(Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Bakaloudi et al., 2020; Guest et al., 2024)
The 2025 statement is narrower than earlier Academy/ADA positions.	Strong	Earlier statements clearly endorsed vegetarian/vegan diets across all life stages.	(Melina et al., 2016; Craig & Mangels, 2009)
The narrowing likely reflects weaker or less settled evidence outside adulthood.	Moderate	Pediatric and special-population reviews report limited, heterogeneous, and contested evidence.	(Neufingerl & Eilander, 2023; Desmond et al., 2024; Brits & Grange, 2025)

Claim	Evidence Strength	Reasoning	Papers
The corpus proves the Academy explicitly documented that rationale in a separate methods paper.	 Weak	No separate methods document in this set directly states that procedural rationale verbatim.	(Raj et al., 2025)

FIGURE 6 Key claims and supporting evidence across included papers

5. Conclusion

The 2025 Academy statement on vegetarian and vegan diets was limited to adults, and the evidence in this corpus indicates that this was because the statement itself and much of its supporting review base were intentionally scoped to adults (Raj et al., 2025; Neufingerl & Eilander, 2021; Bakaloudi et al., 2020). Relative to the Academy's 2009 and 2016 all-life-stage statements, the 2025 document represents a clear narrowing in population scope rather than a mere wording change (Craig & Mangels, 2009; Melina et al., 2016).

Research Gaps

The biggest remaining gap is process transparency: the corpus strongly supports the adult-only scope, but it does not include a standalone Academy methods paper explaining the decision in full. Evidence is also much less uniform for pregnancy, lactation, childhood, and some older-adult outcomes.

Topic/Outcome	Adult RCTs	Adult reviews	Pediatric reviews	Guideline-process documents
General nutrient adequacy	10	10	4	1
Pregnancy and lactation	1	2	GAP	1
Childhood and adolescence	GAP	1	10	2
Older adults	3	3	GAP	1
Position-statement methodology	GAP	1	GAP	1

FIGURE 7 Evidence coverage across populations and document types

Open Research Questions

Clarifying these questions would make future position statements easier to interpret and compare.

Question	Why
Did the Academy formally exclude pregnancy, lactation, and pediatric populations at the protocol stage for the 2025 position statement?	This would directly test whether the adult-only wording reflects a prespecified evidence-review protocol rather than later editorial narrowing.
What minimum evidence threshold would justify restoring all-life-stage language in future Academy vegan diet position statements?	Current organizations reach different conclusions from overlapping evidence, so explicit thresholds would improve transparency and comparability.
How do well-planned vegan diets affect long-term growth, bone health, and micronutrient status in children under	Pediatric reviews remain heterogeneous and policy disagreement persists despite growing uptake of plant-based diets in families.

Question	Why
routine supervision?	

In short, yes: the 2025 Academy position statement was adult-only because the statement and the evidence review it synthesized were scoped to adults.

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