Vitamin D Continues to Show Promise for Mental Health

By Greg Arnold, October 22, 2008, abstracted from “Prevalence of Vitamin D Insufficiency in Patients with Parkinson Disease and Alzheimer Disease” in the October 2008 issue of the Archives of Neurology

Link – [http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/HealthNotes/M103659.htm](http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/HealthNotes/M103659.htm)

Parkinson Disease (PD) is characterized by tremors, slowness of movement, stiffness, and difficulty with balance. The condition affects more than 1.5 million Americans, with 60,000 new cases each year. It costs the U.S. healthcare system more than $5.6 billion per year, with medication costs for an individual patient averaging $2,500 a year and therapeutic surgery costing up to $100,000 dollars per patient.

Possible causes of PD include oxidative stress and a high homocysteine level. Fortunately, nutrition, including increases in both unsaturated fat and vitamin E intake and vitamin B-6, is becoming a viable way to help protect against PD. Now a new study has found that vitamin D, whose numerous health benefits include heart health, blood sugar health, prostate health, bone health, breast cell health, longevity, mental health, dental health, and back health, may also help with mental health.

Previous research has shown that vitamin D deficiency adversely affects nerve function. Building on these findings, researchers selected 100 patients with diagnosed PD, 100 patients with Alzheimer Disease (AD), and 100 healthy patients with an average age of 65 years from the Clinical Research in Neurology (CRIN) Database from the Emory University School of Medicine. They examined the patients’ blood samples to look at vitamin D blood levels. “Vitamin D insufficiency” was defined as having vitamin D blood levels below 30 nanograms per milliliter and “vitamin D deficiency” was defined as vitamin D blood levels below 20 nanograms per milliliter.

The researchers found that 55% of the PD patients had vitamin D insufficiency compared to 41% of AD patients and 36% of controls. Regarding vitamin D deficiency, 23% of the PD patients were deficient compared to 16% of AD patients and 10% of the controls.

With results supported by previous research examining vitamin D and PD, the researchers “found that PD patients have a higher prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency compared with patients with AD and healthy controls.” They called for future research to address whether vitamin D supplementation would improve PD symptoms.

Greg Arnold is a Chiropractic Physician practicing in Danville, CA. You can contact Dr. Arnold directly by emailing him at mailto:PitchingDoc@msn.com or visiting his web site at [www.PitchingDoc.com](http://www.PitchingDoc.com)

Reference:

1 “About Parkinson Disease” posted on the National Parkinson Foundation Website [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)


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