

Low Vitamin D Levels May Raise Alzheimer's Risk

Older adults with too little vitamin D in their blood may have twice the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease as seniors with sufficient levels. The research, which was based on more than 1,600 adults over age 65, found the risk for Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia increased with the severity of vitamin D deficiency, reported WebMD, noting the findings aren't enough to recommend seniors take vitamin D supplements to prevent mental decline.

"Clinical trials are now urgently needed in this area," said David Llewellyn, a senior research fellow in clinical epidemiology at the University of Exeter Medical School (Exeter, England) and study researcher. And another expert agreed. "This shows you there is a link between vitamin D and the development of Alzheimer's," said Keith Fargo, director of scientific programs and outreach, Alzheimer's Association. "What it doesn't show you is that cause-and-effect link."

Published in August, 2014 in the journal *Neurology*, the study is the largest yet to find an association between low levels of vitamin D and dementia, according to WebMD.

Exactly how low vitamin D may be linked with dementia isn't known, reported WebMD, adding experts speculate that the vitamin may clear plaques in the brain linked with dementia. "This has been shown in the lab" said Fargo. He noted that until more research is in, people should try to eat a brain healthy diet, which is the same as a heart-healthy diet, including foods low in fat and cholesterol.

Getting regular physical activity, keeping blood pressure under control and maintaining a diet of foods low in fat and cholesterol, are all good measures to take to prevent the disease, said Fargo.

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