MSM Improves Pain, Function in Arthritis Patients

Methysulfonymethane (MSM) improves pain and physical function in adults with knee osteoarthritis pain, according to scientists at the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine and the Arthritis Health Center in Arizona. MSM supplementation not only was well tolerated with no adverse effects, but also was associated with improvements in markers of cardiovascular risk and oxidative stress.

This double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial tracked 50 adults over the age of 40 who had been diagnosed with knee osteoarthritis. The participants were randomly assigned to take either three grams of MSM twice daily or a placebo for 12 weeks. At the study’s end, they were evaluated for osteoarthritis pain, stiffness, physical function, and overall symptoms. Additionally, the investigators evaluated several laboratory markers in the patients.

The individuals who used MSM experienced significantly decreased arthritis pain and impaired physical function. Supplementing with MSM also markedly improved their ability to perform daily activities. Moreover, the MSM group saw reductions in both serum homocysteine, a cardiovascular disease risk factor, and urine malondialdehyde, a marker of oxidative stress.

MSM thus appears to be a safe, effective remedy for osteoarthritis of the knee, and may also support cardiovascular health. These findings offer hope for the one in three Americans who experience daily joint pain due to arthritis, and are especially timely as several prescription arthritis drugs have recently been taken off the market because they may raise cardiovascular risk.

Although its precise mechanism of action is unknown, MSM is rich in sulfur, a crucial component of the body’s connective tissues. Scientists believe MSM may promote joint and connective tissue health by providing beneficial sulfur.

—Elizabeth Wagner, ND

References