Lower Vitamin D Levels Predict Increased Blood Sugar and Insulin Resistance

A recent issue of *Diabetes* published the outcome of a study of middle-aged men and women that found lower serum vitamin D levels are associated with an increased risk of developing insulin resistance and elevated blood sugar over a 10-year period.*

The study included 524 non-diabetic participants in the Ely Study. Upon enrollment, serum vitamin D and other factors were measured, and health habits were ascertained. Weight, height, waist circumference, blood pressure, plasma glucose, lipids, and fasting insulin were measured during the initial and 10-year follow-up visits.

At the end of the follow-up period, having a higher baseline serum vitamin D level was associated with a lower adjusted 10-year risk of elevated blood sugar, insulin resistance, and high metabolic syndrome score. The authors remark that the study's findings add evidence to previously reported observations concerning vitamin D's effect on metabolic syndrome risk.


Drinking Red Wine Associated With Reduced Lung Cancer Risk in Male Smokers

In a recent study, California Kaiser Permanente researchers report yet another benefit associated with drinking red wine: a lower risk of lung cancer.*

Chun Chao, PhD, and colleagues analyzed data from the California Men's Health Study of 84,170 men. Surveys completed between 2000 and 2003 provided information concerning demographics and lifestyle characteristics, including alcoholic beverage consumption. Over the three-year period, 210 cases of lung cancer were identified.

Among men who reported ever having smoked, drinking one or more glasses of red wine per day was associated with a 60% lower adjusted risk of lung cancer compared with the risk experienced by those who did not consume red wine. No effect for beer, liquor, or white wine was observed. “This finding, if confirmed is of interest for lung cancer chemoprevention in current and former smokers,” the authors write.


Fish Oil Protective Against Dementia, Depression

Higher blood levels of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) are associated with a lower risk of dementia and depression in elderly persons in a recent study.* EPA is an omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid found in certain fish that may decrease the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

The study included 1,214 French persons aged 65 or older living in the community who were examined for dementia and blood levels of fatty acids over four years. Depression was also assessed because it has been related to both low EPA and dementia. By four years, 65 patients had developed dementia.

A higher level of EPA was associated with a lower likelihood of dementia, even after accounting for depression and other patient characteristics. An association between depression and dementia was also confirmed. The authors concluded, “because depression and dementia share common vascular risk factors, the vascular properties of EPA could contribute to decrease depression and dementia risk simultaneously.”
