**Multiple Vitamin/Mineral Boosts Mental Health in Older Adults**

A daily multivitamin and mineral supplement improves mood in older adults, a new study suggests.*

English researchers, testing 225 elderly hospitalized patients, found those on a daily supplement regimen for six weeks had higher levels of folate and vitamin B12, compared with those on placebo.

Significant differences were also reported for symptoms of depression scores between the groups, with beneficial effects observed for patients on the supplement.

Other studies have previously shown an association between deficiencies in folate and vitamin B12 and depression.

“Both folate and vitamin B12 are important for the nervous system at all ages, but in older people where deficiencies are known to be common even in relatively healthy persons, low folate and vitamin B12 status affects mood, cognitive and social functions,” the researchers noted.

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**Low Vitamin D Levels Linked with Increased Blood Pressure**

Another new study points to a link between vitamin D levels and cardiovascular health, and may help explain why hypertension seems to afflict more black Americans than other ethnic groups.*

Using data from the Third US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, researchers found that individuals with the lowest vitamin D levels had slightly higher blood pressure. Non-Hispanic white Americans had the highest vitamin D blood levels, followed by Mexican Americans, while non-Hispanic black Americans had the lowest levels.

“This finding may have public health significance, as vitamin D levels can easily, and cheaply, be increased by a modest increase in sun exposure or vitamin D supplementation,” researchers noted in the *American Journal of Hypertension.*

Many public health experts now advise that all adults should increase their vitamin D intake to at least 1,000 IU per day and should regularly monitor their blood levels.

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*C. Burke

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**Testosterone Cream Increases Women’s Libido**

A daily dose of the male sex hormone, testosterone, significantly improves libido in postmenopausal women who have undergone a hysterectomy, Australian researchers reported recently.*

Thirty-six women participated in the double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, cross-over study. The women had scored low on a standardized test of sexual function, despite being in a stable relationship. They were already taking supplemental estrogen. None suffered from depression.

Subjects applied testosterone cream or placebo to the skin each day for three months. Test and control subjects then blindly switched treatments for another three months.

The testosterone cream significantly improved sexual desire, frequency of sex, receptivity, and initiation, as measured by a standardized assessment of sexual function. “It was effective, easy to use, and had no side effects,” concluded researchers.

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*Dale Kiefer

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