Two new studies support zinc supplements for ADHD, with and without Ritalin

First study:
Researchers in Turkey conducted a trial with 328 boys and 72 girls, and assigned them to a placebo or treatment group for 12 weeks. The treatment group received zinc sulfate. Symptoms were assessed with the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Scale (ADHDS), Conners Teacher Questionnaire, and DuPaul Parent Ratings of ADHD.

Zinc sulfate was significantly superior to placebo in reducing hyperactive, impulsive, and impaired socialization symptoms. The zinc did not reduce attention deficiency symptoms.

Based on additional information, the authors concluded that the treatment should be considered for older ADHD children with high body mass index (overweight) who have low zinc and essential fatty acid levels.


Second study:
In this 6-week, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, the effects of zinc plus methylphenidate (Ritalin) were assessed in the treatment of children with ADHD. 44 outpatient children (26 boys and 18 girls) between the ages of 5 and 11 were assigned to groups receiving Ritalin (one mg per kg of weight per day) plus zinc sulfate (55 mg per day), or the same amount of Ritalin with a sucrose placebo.

The children taking the zinc and Ritalin improved significantly more than those on placebo with Ritalin. Some children reported a metallic taste in the mouth and/or nausea with the zinc.


Yes, food additives really do increase behavioral problems.

Editor: Latitudes frequently carries articles on the harmful effects of synthetic chemical additives in foods. This topic has been researched previously with a clear connection shown, yet parents often report that their doctor insists there is no relationship between food and behavior. This is a good article to share with these medical professionals, as well as with educators.

Study links food additives with hyperactivity
A government-sponsored study in the UK shows that food additives can trigger hyperactivity in children, regardless of whether they have a previous history of behavioral problems. Results of this study appear in the June 2004 issue of Archives of Disease in Childhood.

The study found significant reductions in hyperactive behavior during the first week of this trial, during which the children were given a diet eliminating artificial colorings and benzoate preservatives.

During the subsequent three weeks, parents reported that the children had significantly greater increases in hyperactive behavior when they were given a drink containing food additives than when given a placebo drink. The additives in the drink were the preservative sodium benzoate, and synthetic food dyes tartrazine (FD&C Yellow #5), sunset yellow (FD&C Yellow #6), carmoisine, and ponceau 4R.

“Our study has shown that the effect of food additives on behavior occurs independently of pre-existing hyperactive behavior,” conclude the scientists. “We believe that this suggests that benefit would accrue for all children if artificial food colors and benzoate preservatives were removed from their diet.”

The authors also indicate that there could be potential long-term public health benefits from eliminating additives because the hyperactive child is at risk of continuing
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