Vitamin D Deficiency: An Emerging Cardiovascular Disease Risk Factor

A recent review published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology describes the involvement of deficient vitamin D levels in common risk factors for cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular events.

Michael F. Holick, MD, PhD, and colleagues note that insufficient levels of vitamin D activate the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system, which can lead to hypertension and thickening of the heart and blood vessel walls. Higher vitamin D levels have been associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, high triglycerides, and obesity. And among Framingham Heart Study participants who had reduced levels of vitamin D upon enrollment, the risk of subsequent cardiovascular events was twice as great as the risk experienced by those with higher levels of the vitamin.

"Vitamin D deficiency is an unrecognized, emerging cardiovascular risk factor, which should be screened for and treated," stated study co-author Dr. James H. O'Keefe.

Vitamin B1 Helps Reverse Early Kidney Disease in Diabetics

A report published in a recent issue of the journal *Diabetologia* reveals that high doses of the B vitamin thiamine can reverse one of the signs of early kidney disease in diabetic patients. Diabetes increases the risk of kidney disease, which is detected in its early stage by testing for albumin in the urine.

Naila Rabbani, PhD, of Warwick Medical School, in collaboration with researchers at the University of Punjab, randomized 40 type 2 diabetics with microalbuminuria to receive three 100 mg capsules of thiamine per day or a placebo for three months. By the end of the treatment period, the researchers observed a 41% average decrease in albumin excretion among patients who received vitamin B1. Thirty-five percent of participants experienced a return to normal albumin excretion with thiamine treatment.

"This study once again highlights the importance of vitamin B1 and we need to increase awareness," Dr. Rabbani stated.

Cancer Prevention Research Conference Reports Protective Effect of Cruciferous Vegetables

At the Seventh Annual International Conference on Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research, Li Tang, PhD, reported the results of a study that compared the diets of lung cancer patients matched for smoking status with subjects who did not have cancer. A strong association was found between a lower risk of lung cancer and greater consumption of fruit, total vegetables, and cruciferous vegetables. While the intake of fruit and total vegetables had a stronger protective effect among those who had never smoked, the benefit for cruciferous vegetables was found to exist only in smokers. Depending on the type of vegetable consumed, as well as smoking status and duration, smokers experienced a 20-55% reduction in lung cancer risk.

"These findings, along with others, indicate cruciferous vegetables may play a more important role in cancer prevention among people exposed to cigarette-smoking," Dr. Tang stated.
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