Vitamin E Reduces Inflammation

A recent issue of the journal Experimental Physiology published the discovery of researchers at the University of Illinois of an anti-inflammatory effect for vitamin E in an animal model of inflammation.*

Kinesiology and community health professor Kimberly Huey, PhD, and colleagues administered vitamin E or a placebo to mice for three days before injecting the animals with a low dose of E. coli lipopolysaccharide to induce inflammation. A control group of animals received saline instead of the lipopolysaccharide.

The team found increased levels of the cytokines interleukin-6 and interleukin-1-beta in the skeletal and cardiac muscle of mice that received lipopolysaccharide, yet among those that received vitamin E, levels of these cytokines were significantly lower than those of the placebo group. The cytokines function as intercellular communicators that assist in immune response, yet can lead to excessive inflammation.

Dr. Huey concluded that vitamin E “may be beneficial in individuals with chronic inflammation, such as the elderly.”

—Dayna Dye


Pharmaceutical Advertising Biases Journals Against Non-Drug Therapies

According to a study conducted at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, advertising by pharmaceutical companies in medical journals is clearly associated with bias against “non-drug” therapies in those journals.*

Researchers examined a year’s worth of issues from 11 “major medical journals,” including influential publications, such as The New England Journal of Medicine, the Journal of the American Medical Association, and the British Medical Journal. Investigators tallied the amount and content of advertising per journal, and noted any coverage of dietary supplements, including the conclusions reached regarding those nutritional supplements.

Journals with the greatest amount of pharmaceutical company-sponsored advertising were least likely to feature articles about dietary supplements. More to the point, when such journals did feature articles regarding supplements, the conclusions were more likely to be negative rather than positive, or merely neutral.

“The results are consistent with the hypothesis that pharmaceutical advertising biases journals against non-drug therapies,” wrote investigators. “In major medical journals, more pharmaceutical advertising is associated with publishing fewer articles about [dietary supplements] and having more negative conclusions about [dietary supplements’] safety.”

—Dale Kiefer
