

Vitamin D May Be of Help in Fibromyalgia

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By Nancy Walsh, Staff Writer, MedPage Today
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Reviewed by Robert Jasmer, MD; Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco and Dorothy Caputo, MA, BSN, RN, Nurse Planner

GLASGOW -- Only 15% of fibromyalgia patients in a small study had adequate levels of vitamin D, suggesting implications for treatment.

Among a cohort of 36 patients, 28% had levels of serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D that were considered **deficient**, defined as below 25 nmol/L, according to Sekharipuram A. Ramakrishnan, MD, of Our Lady's Hospital in Navan, Ireland.

And 62% of the cohort had levels considered **insufficient**, between 25 and 80 nmol/L, he reported in a poster session at the annual meeting of the British Society for Rheumatology.

Previous studies examining the relationship between vitamin D levels and nonspecific musculoskeletal pain have turned in conflicting results.

In some cohorts of patients with fibromyalgia, vitamin D levels were low, while in other groups there were no differences between patients and controls.

Moreover, in some studies, patients with low levels who received supplementation with the vitamin showed no clinical benefit.

"Nonetheless, we do know that **vitamin D deficiency is associated with muscle pain**, which is why we did this observational study," Ramakrishnan told *MedPage Today*.

Patients' mean age was 47, and 90% were women.

Serum calcium and alkaline phosphatase levels were normal in all patients, indicating normal bone chemistry.

The study findings must be considered in light of the background population, however, Ramakrishnan said.

"**Ireland is not very sunny, and 30% to 40% of all Irish women are deficient in vitamin D**," he explained. "We postulate that these patients are staying indoors because of their pain, and aren't inclined to go on holidays in sunny locations because of their disability."

Further work is needed to determine if early detection and replacement of vitamin D may have a therapeutic role in the overall management of fibromyalgia. Therefore, large scale studies of this should be undertaken, Ramakrishnan said.

"We are currently giving all our fibromyalgia patients vitamin D supplements," he added.

The authors had no conflicts of interest.

Primary source: British Society for Rheumatology

Source reference:

Jan A, et al "Serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D levels in patients with fibromyalgia" *BSR 2012; Abstract 231*.

Action Points

Note that this study was published as an abstract and presented at a conference. These data and conclusions should be considered to be preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Researchers found a significant association between moderate to severe vitamin D deficiency and newly diagnosed fibromyalgia.

Note that serum calcium and alkaline phosphatase levels were normal in all patients, indicating normal bone chemistry.