
Vitamin C Rapidly Improves Emotional State of Acutely Hospitalised Patients, Study Suggests



Treatment with vitamin C rapidly improves the emotional state of acutely hospitalised patients, according to a study carried out by researchers at Montreal's Jewish General Hospital (JGH) and the affiliated Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research (LDI).

In a double-blind clinical trial, patients admitted to the JGH were randomly assigned to receive either vitamin C or vitamin D supplements for seven to ten days. Patients administered vitamin C had a rapid and statistically and clinically significant improvement in mood state, but no significant change in mood occurred with vitamin D, the researchers discovered. Their results were published recently in the journal *Nutrition*.

"Earlier studies, both in our hospital and in other centres, demonstrated that the majority of acutely hospitalised patients have subnormal levels of vitamins C and D in their blood," said Dr. L. John Hoffer, MD, PhD, an investigator at the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research.

"About one in five acute-care patients in our hospital have vitamin C levels so low as to be compatible with scurvy," added Hoffer, also a Senior Physician in the Divisions of Internal Medicine and Endocrinology, and a professor of medicine at McGill University. "But patients are rarely given vitamin supplements. Most physicians are simply unaware of the problem. Subclinical deficiencies of vitamin C and D have each been linked to psychological abnormalities, so we examined that aspect in our clinical trial."

"The lack of any effect of vitamin D on mood is good evidence we are not dealing with a placebo response," said Dr. Hoffer. "This looks like a true biological effect. Our finding definitely requires follow up in larger studies in other centres," he said. "The treatment is safe, simple and cheap, and could have major clinical practice implications."

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