



What you should know about the 'vitamin research'

Article by Marek Doyle, www.blueprintfitness.co.uk

Many of you may have been concerned by the recent adverse coverage of anti-oxidant supplements. This was the second press release of the same research led by Goran Bjelakovic, which suggested that vitamins A and E could increase morbidity. This is simply not true.

In reality, this was actually no more than a meta-analysis of certain studies that suited the demands of those who paid for it (the pharmaceutical industry). The only point of interest in this study is how it shows the level of media control levied by the pharma giants.

The major issue is the total lack of science involved in collecting the data used. A meta-analysis is a type of study that compares large collections of similar research to look for patterns. Used correctly, it can be a very useful method; used as it was in this case, it becomes little more than a joke.

Dr Bjelakovic selected 67 different studies that looked at anti-oxidant supplements and morbidity. In them, he was able to find unfavourable results of vitamin A, beta-carotene and vitamin E, although was unable to generate any negative figures for vitamin c and selenium. However, there were two incredibly obvious flaws with this study:

1. many of these studies were conducted on populations with existing medical conditions. Clearly it is ridiculous to compare sufferers of chronic conditions to the population at large.
2. 405 studies were excluded from this meta-analysis because they showed no deaths whatsoever. Including the other questionable exclusions, the researchers eliminated **91%** of the available studies!

The results were further clouded through the inclusion of smokers in the trials (vitamin E is known to be damaging to the body when it reacts with cigarette smoke) and the counting method of all-cause mortality, which means that individuals who died in plane crashes are counted as showing the ineffectiveness of anti-oxidants!

Clearly you do not need to be a scientist to see that it is impossible to attempt a conclusion from such an unrepresentative sample. How do you expect to accurately show the rate of mortality if you deliberately exclude the entire range of positive results? Even using the most negative 9% of studies available (748 in total), the researchers were still only able to return a very marginal result against the nutrients.

This is exactly the same as assessing the reliability of a new Mercedes, and asking 100 new owners how many breakdowns they experienced in a year. If just nine owners experienced one breakdown each, it would be scandalous to exclude the 91 others and conclude that 'the new Mercedes breaks down once per year', when in reality the breakdown rate is 0.09. When questioned why they excluded all 405 trials that showed no

deaths, review co-author Christian Gluud said that they made the exclusions because trials without deaths were not 'proper preventative trials'. That was his explanation.

Gluud, like Bjelakovic, is a man with a big axe to grind. The group involved in this study are the only individuals who have managed to produce negative data on vitamins and minerals and do so in 100% of their research – something that is scientifically impossible without staggering bias.

In summary, this is yet another example of the way pharmaceutical industry attempts to damage natural health of the population. Illness is good for profits, health is not. However, you should exercise your right to optimum health by paying due attention to a good dietary intake and intelligent supplementation – your increased energy, mental function and vitality will tell you whether you were right to do so.

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