

Fish Oil an anti-inflammatory



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The Journal of Rheumatology reports that daily intake of essential fatty acids (EFAs) could help reduce the need for painkillers in patients suffering from arthritis and/or inflammation.

The potential anti-inflammatory of EFAs was first suggested by epidemiological studies in Greenland Eskimos in 1980. In Greenland fatty acid intake from seafood is high and there is a marked lower prevalence of auto-immune and inflammatory conditions.

A study from the University of Dundee UK, involved 97 rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients over a five year period. Patients were 37 to 78 years of ages, 69 of which were female and 28 male. They were given 2.2g a day of EPA and DHA fatty acids (or placebo). The researcher's documented the patients' use and daily requirement of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), noting clinical and laboratory parameters of RA disease activity at 0, 4, 12, 24 and 36 weeks.

Results showed that the RA patients taking oral supplements of EPA/DHA were able to reduce their intake of NSAIDs by more than a third, without worsening their disease symptoms. The researcher's concluded "fish oil supplementation should be considered in RA patients to help them reduce their NSAID intake in order to attenuate the risks of gastrointestinal and cardiovascular adverse events (ie. side effects) associated with these drugs".

This effect has been documented in previous studies - one of which in 2007 showed that increased intake of fish oil over vegetable oil was found to help reduce the inflammation of various tissues and organs. The study in the Journal of Biological Chemistry reported how, compared to vegetable oil, omega-3 fish oil had a greater effect of decreasing the formulation of chemicals called prostanoids. When produced in excess, prostanoids increase inflammation in various tissues and organs which contributes to otherwise avoidable chronic disease.

In addition, studies from Melbourne's RMIT University also reported that omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid extracts from the green lipped mussel inhibited leukotriene and cyclooxygenase (COX) activity, both of which are involved in the inflammatory process.

Lastly, the Journal of Life Sciences (published in 2006) reported an animal study that found a lower-calorie diet rich in fish oil could reduce the markers of inflammation by as much as 90 per cent. Inflammation is closely tied to increase oxidative stress levels in our body, advanced ageing and often associated reduced antioxidant capacity - impacting negatively in many ways, our health and longevity.

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For quantifiable suggestions on how to manage and effectively reduce your symptoms of inflammation or arthritic joints (be that RA or wear and tear from osteoarthritis - OA) see me in clinic. We can identify the drivers and work to resolve these outcomes for more positive experiences of lasting well-being.

reference:

B. Galarraga, M. Hoi, HM. Youssef, A. Hill, H McMahon, C. Hall, S. Ogston, G. Nuiki and JJF. Belch, 'Cod liver oil (n-3 fatty acids) as a non-steroidal and anti-inflammatory drug sparing agent in rheumatoid arthritis', Rheumatology, 2008.