

Journal of the American Medical Association: Vitamins Could Raise Risk Of Early Death

“Vitamins Could Shorten Lifespan”

In recent years, taking vitamin supplements has become a fashionable trend. Many health-conscious people take vitamin supplements constantly for good health. However, a new Danish-led study suggests that rather than improve health, vitamin supplements may raise the risk of early death.

May Raise Risk Of Early Death

According to UK media reports on 28 February, the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) showed that three types of supplements — vitamins A, E and beta-carotene — could increase the risk of early death. Research shows that vitamin supplements are a waste of money. The British Heart Foundation recommends a good balanced diet over taking vitamin supplements.

The Copenhagen University Hospital research team analyzed a lot of information. The analysis method is developed by Cochrane Collaboration, a renowned organization that specializes in medical analysis.

Vitamin supplement supporters believe that vitamins can act as antioxidants to prevent the damaging oxidizing effects of cholesterol etc on health, thereby helping heart disease and cancer prevention. This theory seems to make sense and is supported by initial tests. However, later tests reveal different results.

The Copenhagen research team selected 68 randomized trials with 232,606 participants, including 47 low-bias trials with 180,938 participants. They discovered that taking vitamin supplements, on the whole, increased death risk by 5%. Beta-carotene produced an approximate 7% increased risk, vitamin A, a 16% increase and vitamin E, a 4% increase. The risk of death was unchanged among vitamin C users. Certain trials showed that selenium, singly or combined with other vitamins, might lower death risk by 10%.

“There is no evidence that vitamin C may increase longevity. We lack evidence to refute a potential negative effect of vitamin C on survival. Selenium tended to reduce mortality, but we need more research on this question,” stated Dr. Goran Bjelakovic, leader of the research team. In addition, beta-carotene might increase the risk of lung cancer among smokers.

Antioxidant Nutritional Supplements: Losing Their Shine?

VITAMIN A

In the past: For maintaining healthy eyes and bones.

Current research: A study by US Harvard University researchers revealed that adding vitamin A to low-fat milk is not beneficial to health. This is because vitamin A may easily lead to osteoporosis. For example, frequent vitamin A users face a 50% increase in risk of bone fractures.

VITAMIN E

In the past: High blood concentration of vitamin E is associated with lower risk of lung cancer. Vitamin E has a significant anti-cancer effect on men below 60 years of age who have been smokers for less than 40 years.

Current research: This kind of preventive effect arises from a balanced diet that includes food rich in vitamin E. At the same time, quit smoking for the best protective effect.

VITAMIN C

In the past: Consuming vitamin C supplements has the same effect as eating foods rich in vitamin C.

Current research: Synthetic vitamin C pills are purely chemical preparations and their effects cannot be compared to natural vitamin C. Furthermore, one may easily overdose on vitamin C pills. Long-term consumption of vitamin C pills may increase oxalic acid in the body. This ups the risk of oxalate-type kidney stone formation.

VITAMIN E, CAROTENE

In the past: Vitamin E and beta-carotene (vitamin A pre-cursor) have antioxidant effects. They work in different ways to fight against cell damage caused by free radicals.

Current research: Researchers from Denmark's University of Copenhagen recently discovered that taking beta-carotene produced an approximate 7% increased risk of death, vitamin E, a 4% increase and vitamin A, a 16% increase.

ALLICIN

In the past: Garlic has anti-bacterial effect; boosts immunity; regulates blood cholesterol; and has anti-tumor effect. The allicin in garlic can significantly lower blood cholesterol.

Current research: The latest research suggests that garlic supplements' blood cholesterol lowering effect is temporary and inconsistent. The only sure fact? Garlic will definitely cause body odor and garlic breath.