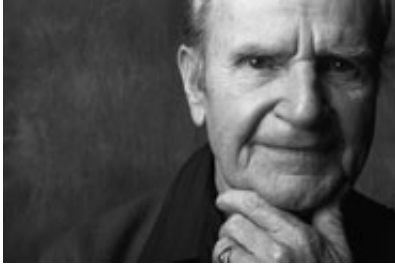


Vitamin D levels, prostate cancer not linked

February 14 2011



(PhysOrg.com) -- In a detailed review, funded by Cancer Research UK, scientists looked at all the available evidence and found there was no link between the amount of vitamin D in men's blood and the risk of prostate cancer.

The findings support a review by the International Agency for Research on [Cancer](#) (IARC) which found no evidence that lower levels of vitamin D increase the risk of [prostate cancer](#).

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer for men in the UK and researchers are hoping to find out more about what could increase or reduce the risk of developing the disease. In laboratory experiments vitamin D has been shown to help slow down cell division – one of the fundamental changes that can lead to cancer.

This review was the largest and most up-to-date investigation of the

worldwide evidence on the link between vitamin D and prostate cancer.

Rebecca Gilbert of Bristol's School of Social and Community Medicine, who led the study, said: "Understanding the role that vitamin D plays in prostate cancer is important to help further our knowledge about why the disease develops. Until now there's been mixed evidence and researchers have not known what role vitamin D plays. But this new review shows that higher or lower levels of vitamin D don't mean men are more or less likely to develop the disease."

Sara Hiom, director of health information at Cancer Research UK, said: "There's still a way to go before we fully understand the link between a person's vitamin D levels and their risk of cancer. There is consistent evidence that bowel cancer is less common in people with high levels of vitamin D. But we still need more research to clarify whether vitamin D directly prevents bowel cancer or if people with higher levels are generally healthier. There's no convincing evidence to suggest that vitamin D offers any protection against other types of cancer developing.

"Vitamin D is important for good health – it helps keep our bodies, and particularly our bones, healthy. One of our main sources of Vitamin D is sun exposure. But it's important not to get red or burnt as this can increase the risk of skin cancer. Enjoying the summer sun, in smaller doses, especially if your skin is pale or freckly can help people strike a balance between making enough vitamin D and reducing the risk of skin cancer. People can also top up their levels of vitamin D by eating more foods like oily fish such as salmon, trout or mackerel. For people who don't get enough sunlight, [Vitamin D](#) supplements may be an option, but do talk to your doctor first."

More information: 'Associations of circulating and dietary vitamin D with prostate cancer risk: a systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis' by R Gilbert, et al. in *Cancer Causes and Control*.

Provided by University of Bristol

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