

Vitamin D with calcium shown to reduce mortality in elderly

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A study recently published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* (JCEM) suggests that vitamin D—when taken with calcium—can reduce the rate of mortality in seniors, therefore providing a possible means of increasing life expectancy.

During the last decade, there has been increasing recognition of the potential health effects of [vitamin D](#). It is well known that calcium with vitamin D supplements reduces the risk of fractures. The present study assessed mortality among patients randomized to either vitamin D alone or vitamin D with calcium. The findings from the study found that the reduced mortality was not due to a lower number of fractures, but represents a beneficial effect beyond the reduced fracture risk.

"This is the largest study ever performed on effects of calcium and vitamin D on mortality," said Lars Rejnmark, PhD, of Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark and lead author of the study. "Our results showed reduced [mortality](#) in elderly patients using vitamin D supplements in combination with calcium, but these results were not found in patients on vitamin D alone."

In this study, researchers used pooled data from eight randomized controlled trials with more than 1,000 participants each. The patient data set was comprised of nearly 90 percent women, with a median age of 70 years. During the three-year study, death was reduced by 9 percent in those treated with vitamin D with calcium.

"Some studies have suggested calcium (with or without vitamin D) supplements can have adverse effects on cardiovascular health," said Rejnmark. "Although our study does not rule out such effects, we found that [calcium](#) with vitamin D supplementation to elderly participants is overall not harmful to survival, and may have beneficial effects on general health".

More information: The article "Vitamin D with calcium reduces mortality: patient level pooled analysis of 70,528 patients from eight major vitamin D trials", appears in the August 2012 issue of *JCEM*.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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