

World-first study tests if food can improve mood

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The study is testing nutrients as mood-elevators, including tryptophan, folic acid, omega-3 and zinc.

Nutrients commonly found in spinach, elk, oysters and crab and the positive effects they may have on people with clinical depression are the

focus of a world-first University of Queensland study.

UQ School of Medicine's Professor Gerard Byrne said that during the study people with clinical [depression](#) would be offered a combination of nutrient-based medications to enhance their mood.

He said depression was often a chronic mental disorder that affected about one in seven Australians.

"Current treatments for clinical depression are only partially effective with about two-thirds of people treated with first-line anti-depressants not reaching remission," Professor Byrne said.

"An emerging approach to treating depression is via the addition of specific nutrients.

"The biological causes underlying depression involve several factors and specific nutrients with antidepressant properties can target particular chemical pathways in the brain.

"While clinical evidence supports the use of several nutrients as antidepressant agents, clinical studies to date have usually only assessed isolated nutrients."

The study team is recruiting adults in South Eastern Queensland with depression who have not responded to ongoing anti-depressant treatment.

Professor Byrne said the eight-week study, which is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, was testing a combination of nutrients with individual evidence as mood-elevators, including tryptophan, folic acid, omega-3 and zinc.

"If a positive outcome is achieved it will have a significant impact on clinical practice and people with [clinical depression](#)," Professor Byrne said.

"It will provide the public with an 'evidence-based' approach to enhancing the response of antidepressants that is affordable, safe and effective."

The study, being done in conjunction with the University of Melbourne, will take place at The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital in Herston, Brisbane.

Those interested in participating in the trial, or learning more about the study, should contact the Brisbane research office on 07 3365 5572 or register their interest at www.nutrientsdepressionstudy.com

Provided by University of Queensland

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