

Vitamin D3 supplementation helps women build muscle even after menopause

September 30 2015

The benefits of vitamin D supplementation for postmenopausal women have been widely debated. But a new study from Sao Paulo, Brazil, now documents that vitamin D supplementation can significantly increase muscle strength and reduce the loss of body muscle mass in women as late as 12+ years after menopause. The study results will be presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS), which begins September 30 in Las Vegas.

Vitamin D deficiency is a common problem in [postmenopausal women](#) worldwide, creating [muscle weakness](#) and a greater tendency for falling. The double-blind, placebo-controlled trial was conducted over a nine-month period. Muscle mass was estimated by total-body DXA (dual energy X-ray absorptiometry), as well as by handgrip strength and through a chair-rising test.

At the end of the trial, the women receiving the supplements demonstrated a significant increase (+25.3%) in [muscle strength](#), while those receiving the placebo actually lost an average of 6.8% of muscle mass. Women not receiving Vitamin D supplements were also nearly two times as likely to fall.

"We concluded that the supplementation of Vitamin D alone provided significant protection against the occurrence of sarcopenia, which is a degenerative loss of skeletal muscle, says Dr. L.M. Cangussu, one of the lead authors of the study from the Botucatu Medical School at Sao Paulo State University.

"While this study is unlikely to decide the debate over Vitamin D, it provides further evidence to support the use of vitamin D supplements by postmenopausal women in an effort to reduce frailty and an increased risk of falling," says NAMS Executive Director Wulf H. Utian, MD, PhD, DSc(Med).

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

Citation: Vitamin D3 supplementation helps women build muscle even after menopause (2015, September 30) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-vitamin-d3-supplementation-women-muscle.html>

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