New study finds link between omega-3 supplementation and reduced hospital stays

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A new meta-analysis published in *Clinical Nutrition* found that cardiac surgery patients who received omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (compared to placebo) in advance of surgery experienced reduced postoperative cardiac arrhythmias and significantly reduced the length of hospital stay by up to 2.4 days. The results are based on 11 RCT's with 1038 patients.

"Omega-3s are well known for their benefits on cardiovascular health, including a reduced risk of arrhythmias and reduced mortality in patients with recent myocardial infarction or cardiac failure," said co-author Dr. Pascal L. Langlois from the Department of Anesthesiology and Reanimation, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Sherbrooke University. "Furthermore, they exhibit interesting anti-inflammatory properties and modulate the immune system."

This study implies a reduction in hospital utilization and overall healthcare costs, and supports an existing body of research demonstrating the heart health benefits of omega-3s.

The reduced length of hospital stay in this study was likely associated with the tendency of the omega-3 group to experience a reduction in postoperative atrial fibrillation, according to the authors. The exact mechanism associated with this benefit is unknown, but it is widely believed to be due to the omega-3s' anti-inflammatory and anti-arrhythmic properties.

More information: Pascal L. Langlois et al, Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in cardiac surgery patients: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis, *Clinical Nutrition* (2016). DOI: 10.1016/j.clnu.2016.05.013