

Vitamin D supplements could ease painful IBS symptoms

January 25 2018



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Vitamin D supplements could help to ease painful Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) symptoms, a new study from the University of Sheffield has found.

Scientists from the University's Department of Oncology and Metabolism reviewed and integrated all available research on [vitamin D](#) and IBS - a condition which affects two in 10 people in the UK.

The study showed a high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in IBS patients - regardless of their ethnicity.

The Sheffield team also assessed the possible benefits of vitamin D supplements on IBS symptoms. Whilst they believe more research still needs to be conducted, their findings suggested supplements may help to ease symptoms which can include abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhoea and constipation. Vitamin D was shown to have the most benefit on quality of life in IBS.

Lead author of the study, Dr Bernard Corfe, said: "The study provides an insight into the condition and, importantly, a new way to try to manage it.

"It is evident from the findings that all people with IBS should have their vitamin D levels tested and a large majority of them would benefit from supplements.

"IBS is a poorly understood condition which impacts severely on the quality of life of sufferers. There is no single known cause and likewise no single known cure."

IBS is a debilitating functional disorder of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Little is known about why and how the condition develops, although it is known that diet and stress can make symptoms worse.

The symptoms often cause embarrassment for patients meaning many live with the condition undiagnosed.

IBS accounts for 10 per cent of visits to GP surgeries and the condition has a significant and escalating burden on society as a consequence of lost work days and time spent on regular hospital appointments.

Vitamin D is essential for general wellbeing, including bone health, immune function, mental health as well as gut health. Vitamin D inadequacy can be remedied relatively easily with supplements if diagnosed.

Low vitamin D status has already been associated with the risk of colorectal cancer and has been implicated in inflammatory bowel disease.

The new study is published today (Thursday 25 January 2018) in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

The University of Sheffield's Department of Oncology and Metabolism conducts world-class research from basic clinical and translational cancer research to life course research and basic level biology through to diseases such as diabetes and osteoporosis.

Provided by University of Sheffield

Citation: Vitamin D supplements could ease painful IBS symptoms (2018, January 25) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-01-vitamin-d-supplements-ease-painful.html>

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