

Can fish oil supplementation attenuate stress symptoms in high risk jobs?

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A study published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* suggests a role for fish-oil supplementation in workers who perform very stressful jobs. There is growing attention being paid to fish oil as one of the promising supplementations to improve symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by facilitating hippocampal neurogenesis and clearance of fear memory. The purpose of this study was to examine the generalizability of the findings from a novel RCT of omega-3 PUFA supplementation in attenuating PTSD symptoms among rescue workers (Disaster Medical Assistance Team, DMAT) in Japan.

A sample of DMAT rescue workers voluntarily participating in the omega-3 PUFA supplementation RCT (n = 172) was compared with the target population of all the non-RCT participating DMAT workers in Japan (n = 10,829). Treatment was associated with significantly lower total Impact of Event Scale score and Impact of Event Scale hyperarousal subscale score only among female DMAT workers. After weighting the data by target population generalizability weights, the significant treatment effect on both the total Impact of Event Scale score and the Impact of Event Scale hyperarousal subscale score among female DMAT workers remained statistically significant. The treatment effects on the rest of the outcomes among female DMAT workers and all the outcomes among male DMAT workers were statistically insignificant both in the unweighted and weighted regression analyses.

This study provides the first supportive evidence to the external validity of the findings from an RCT of omega-3 PUFA supplementation. The

findings of omega-3 PUFA supplementation attenuating PTSD symptoms appear to be generalizable to the target population of the female DMAT rescue workers in Japan. Future studies should investigate whether the findings of this study hold for omega-3 PUFA supplementation in different contexts and target populations.

More information: Ryoko Susukida et al. Generalizability of Findings from a Randomized Controlled Trial of Fish Oil Supplementation for Attenuating Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms among Rescue Workers in Japan, *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* (2018). [DOI: 10.1159/000485105](https://doi.org/10.1159/000485105)

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