

Study is first to find significant link between sleepiness and vitamin D

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A new study suggests that there is a significant correlation between excessive daytime sleepiness and vitamin D, and race plays an important factor.

Results show that in patients with normal vitamin D levels, progressively higher levels of daytime sleepiness were correlated inversely with progressively lower levels of vitamin D. Among patients with [vitamin D deficiency](#), sleepiness and vitamin D levels were associated only among black patients. Surprisingly, this correlation was observed in a direct relationship, with higher vitamin D levels associated with a higher level of sleepiness among black patients.

"While we found a significant correlation between vitamin D and sleepiness, the relationship appears to be more complex than we had originally thought," said David McCarty, MD, the study's principal investigator. "It's important to now do a follow-up study and look deeper into this correlation."

The study, appearing online in the Dec. 15 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, involved a consecutive series of 81 sleep clinic patients who complained of [sleep problems](#) and nonspecific pain. All patients eventually were diagnosed with a sleep disorder, which in the majority of cases was obstructive sleep apnea. Vitamin D level was measured by blood sampling, and sleepiness was determined using the Epworth Sleepiness Scale.

According to the authors, this is the first study to demonstrate a significant relationship between sleepiness and vitamin D. They noted that it is logical for race to affect this relationship because increased [skin pigmentation](#) is an established risk factor for low vitamin D.

The study was not designed to examine causality. However, the authors' previous and current research suggests that suboptimal levels of vitamin D may cause or contribute to [excessive daytime](#)

[sleepiness](#), either directly or by means of chronic pain.

More information: "Vitamin D, Race, and Excessive Daytime Sleepiness", *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 2012.

Provided by American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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