

Some fatty acids better than electronics

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U.S. scientists say omega-3 fatty acids might prevent more sudden deaths than defibrillators in homes and public places or even implanted defibrillators.

Researchers at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn., compared such preventive strategies in a computer-simulated community of 100,000 people that resembled the population of Olmsted County, Minn., in 2000.

By raising omega-3 fatty acids levels among the cyber-Olmsted citizens, Dr. Thomas Kottke and colleagues were able to lower overall death rates in the simulated population by 6.4 percent.

By contrast, automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, reduced death rates by 0.8 percent, and implanted defibrillators, ICDs, reduced deaths by 3.3 percent.

People can raise their omega-3 levels by eating fish or taking supplements.

Kottle said the research suggests raising omega-3 fatty acids "would have about eight times the impact of distributing AEDs and two times the impact of implanting ICDs."

The study appears in the October issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Kottke said.

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