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Vitamin E a 'potential weapon' against obesity related disease: Study



By Nathan Gray+
29-Apr-2013

1 comment



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Consumption of vitamin E could help to battle the symptoms of liver disease brought on by obesity, according to new research.

The new data, presented at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, offers a potential way to fight the obesity-related illness, after US-based researchers stumbled upon the findings by accident while studying the effect of vitamin E deficiency on the central nervous system.

"These findings may have a significant impact on public health," said Manor – noting that the 'vast majority' of adults do not consume enough vitamin E to meet national guidelines.

"Simple and affordable dietary intervention may benefit people at risk for this debilitating disease," he said.

The NASH problem

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After their initial accidental finding, the team checked the literature – and found previous research suggesting that vitamin E may alleviate some symptoms of nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), and suggesting a link between adequate vitamin E levels and liver disease in human.

NASH is a common complication of obesity that is characterised by fat accumulation, oxidative stress and inflammation in the liver. It is the most severe form of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and is a major cause of tissue scarring known as cirrhosis that leads to liver failure and may progress to liver cancer.

There is currently no treatment for NASH, making it one of the most common reasons for liver transplantation, noted Manor – who also pointed out that the condition “piggybacks on the two great epidemics of our time: obesity and Type 2 diabetes.”

Vitamin E solution

To test the hypothesis that vitamin E may alleviate NASH, the team then studied a mouse that was engineered to lack a protein that regulates the levels of the essential vitamin.

As expected, they observed increased oxidative stress, fat deposition and other signs of liver injury in the mice.

Importantly, however, *“supplementation with vitamin E averted the majority of NASH-related symptoms in these animals, confirming the relationship between vitamin E deficiency and liver disease,”* Manor pointed out.

He added that the significance of his group's findings is not only the possibility that they will aid those who are currently sick but that they may also *“affect many people who are presently healthy, but are at risk for becoming obese or diabetic in the future.”*

Mechanism clue

In addition Manor also said he believes the discovery will may key to determining the molecular mechanisms of NASH itself:

“Right now, we really don't understand how NASH progresses from mild liver damage to severe liver failure,” he said.

“Our results will enable us to dissect the different steps in this progression, as well as study how oxidative stress affects liver function more generally, giving possible insights into other related disorders.”

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Vita E prevents liver disease!

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Posted by **Herman Rutner**
29 April 2013 | 15h26

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