

# Nutritional vitamin D supplements do not help treat anemia in dialysis patients

December 17 2015

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There is no role for nutritional vitamin D supplements in treating anemia in patients on hemodialysis, according to a study appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology (JASN)*.

Nutritional vitamin D may have numerous functions in the body, outside of bone, and vitamin D deficiency has been implicated in diseases ranging from cardiovascular disease to cancer. Preliminary evidence suggests that nutritional vitamin D supplementation may benefit [dialysis patients](#) by enhancing blood cell production, or erythropoiesis. This would be beneficial because many individuals with kidney dysfunction develop anemia, or low red blood cell levels.

In the largest randomized clinical trial to date on the effects of nutritional vitamin D in dialysis patients, Dana Miskulin, MD (Tufts

Medical Center) and her colleagues found that vitamin D2 supplements taken for 6 months did not reduce dialysis patients' need for drugs that stimulate [red blood cell](#) production.

"This study also did not find an effect of supplementing hemodialysis patients with nutritional vitamin D on several other secondary outcomes including parathyroid hormone levels, inflammatory markers, infection, or cardiovascular events, though the statistical power for these clinical outcomes was limited," said Dr. Miskulin. The trial included 276 patients who were randomized to 6 months of vitamin D2 or placebo.

**More information:** The article, entitled "Ergocalciferol Supplementation in Hemodialysis Patients With Vitamin D Deficiency: A Randomized Clinical Trial," will appear online on December 17, 2015. [DOI: 10.1681/ASN.2015040468](https://doi.org/10.1681/ASN.2015040468)

Provided by American Society of Nephrology

Citation: Nutritional vitamin D supplements do not help treat anemia in dialysis patients (2015, December 17) retrieved 17 December 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-12-nutritional-vitamin-d-supplements-anemia.html>

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