



Omega-3 Fatty Acid Trial to Study Effect on Progression of Alzheimer's

<http://www.firstlight.cn> 2007-05-29

May 14, 2007, Nutritionists have long endorsed fish as part of a heart-healthy diet, and now some studies suggest that omega-3 fatty acids found in the oil of certain fish and algae could lower the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center will take part in a national clinical trial of one omega-3 fatty acid, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), to determine its impact, if any, on the progression of Alzheimer's disease. The trial is supported by the National Institute on Aging (NIA).

Anton P. Porsteinsson, M.D., director of Alzheimer's Disease Care and Research Education at the Medical Center, is conducting the study in the Rochester area.

"Evidence to date in various research studies that have examined the effect of omega-3 fatty acids on Alzheimer's disease merits further evaluation in a rigorous clinical trial," Porsteinsson said. "Our hope is that we may find out that DHA plays a role in slowing the progression of this destructive disease.

In recent European studies and the Framingham Heart Study, scientists reported that people with the highest blood levels of DHA were about half as likely to develop dementia as those with lower levels.

Researchers will evaluate whether taking DHA over many months slows the progression of both cognitive and functional decline in people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's. During the 18-month clinical trial, investigators will measure the progress of the disease using standard tests for functional and cognitive change.

The clinical trial, coordinated by the University of California at San Diego, will take place at 52 sites across the United States. Researchers plan to enroll 400 participants age 50 and older with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. Joseph Quinn, M.D., associate professor of neurology at Oregon Health and Science University, is directing the national trial.

For the clinical trial, the Martek Biosciences Corp. of Columbia, Md., will donate a pure form of DHA made from algae devoid of fish-related contaminants. Participants will receive either two grams of DHA per day or an inactive placebo pill. About 60 percent of participants will receive DHA, and 40 percent will get the placebo. Doctors and nurses at the 52 research clinic sites will monitor the participants in regular visits throughout the trial. To ensure unbiased results, neither the researchers conducting the trial nor the participants will know who is getting DHA and who is receiving the placebo.

In addition to monitoring disease progression through cognitive tests, researchers will also evaluate whether taking DHA supplements has a positive effect on physical and biological markers of Alzheimer's, such as brain atrophy and proteins in blood and spinal fluid.

To learn how to participate in the study, contact 585-760-6585 or the NIA's Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center at 1-800-438-4380 or by email to adeaar@nia.nih.gov.

In the past 20 years, physicians at the University of Rochester Medical Center and their patients have taken part in virtually every large study of a potential Alzheimer's medication. Their work has spanned a time when there were no medications approved to treat the disease, to today when an array of drugs is available to help fight symptoms such as memory loss, thanks in part to people who volunteered for early studies of the medications.

More people have taken part in Alzheimer's studies at the University of Rochester Medical Center than at any other site in the nation, according to figures from the Alzheimer's Disease Cooperative Study (ADCS) group, the premier collection of scientists nationwide who work together to test new treatments for the disease.

During the last five years, 130 people in the Rochester area took part in the group's studies, a number nearly double the next-highest institution's total of 68. Rochester's numbers are even more significant when the size of the metropolitan area is compared to other cities like New York and Los Angeles, which also have study sites. ADCS includes 66 sites around the country.

During the past two decades, more than 1,500 people from the Rochester area have taken part in dozens of Alzheimer's studies that have helped advance treatment for millions of patients around the globe. The University is the leading site for Alzheimer's treatment throughout western New York, with about 2,500 patients.

[存档文本](#)

