

A new study reports on the benefit of high dose Vitamin E in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's Disease. Compared to placebo, patients taking Vitamin E had slower functional decline and needed less caregiver assistance.

Vitamin E slows functional decline in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease

A recent study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported on the benefits of vitamin E supplementation in mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. Researchers sought to determine if vitamin E, memantine (an ACE inhibitor), or both would slow progression of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease (AD).

The double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial involved 613 patients with mild to moderate AD. Participants were randomized to receive 2,000 international units (IU) of vitamin E, 20 milligrams of memantine, a combination of both, or a placebo daily. Average follow-up was 2.3 years.

Patients were analyzed on their capability to perform daily living activities, memory and language, cognitive function, behavioral and psychological issues, and the time needing caregiver assistance. The data was measured and collected at the beginning of the study and every six months during the trial.

Over the years of follow-up, scores declined by 3.15 units less in the Vitamin E group compared with the placebo group. In the memantine group, the scores declined 1.98 units less than the decline in the placebo group. Compared to the placebo group, those taking Vitamin E had an average delay in clinical progression of 19% per year, or approximately 6.2 months over the follow-up period. Patients receiving the vitamin also needed less caregiver assistance in comparison with the placebo group. There was no significant difference in all-cause mortality or safety issues reported between the placebo and Vitamin E groups.

This study showed that high dose Vitamin E appears to slow functional decline and caregiver burden in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease.

Maurice W. Dysken, MD et al. Effect of Vitamin E and Memantine on Functional Decline in Alzheimer Disease: The TEAM-AD VA Cooperative Randomized Trial JAMA. 2014;311(1):33-44.