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In a recent population based study of men and women over 65 years of age, those experiencing chronic moderate to extreme pain were twice as likely to be vitamin D deficient than those not reporting pain.

POOR VITAMIN D STATUS IS ASSOCIATED WITH CHRONIC PAIN IN THE ELDERLY

Inadequate vitamin D levels are common in older adults and may result in osteoporosis, osteomalacia and a wide range of other non-communicable diseases that have potential effects on health outcomes. Moderate to extreme pain is also more likely to present in older adults.

A recent study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* has shown that older men and women experiencing moderate to extreme chronic pain are more likely than others to have poor vitamin D status.

Researchers sought to examine the connection between chronic pain and serum vitamin D levels among a population of men and women aged 65 years or older. The study included 2,070 adults who took part in the 2005 annual Health Survey for England, which assessed health and health-related behaviors in children and adults.

The results of this study show that symptoms of chronic pain were associated with poor vitamin D status, independent of other variables. Of the 53% of participants that reported experiencing moderate or extreme pain or discomfort, 80% had chronic illnesses and 60% had been diagnosed with musculoskeletal conditions.

The odds of experiencing moderate to severe pain increased with decreasing levels of serum vitamin D. In those reporting pain, the odds of being deficient in vitamin D (less than 25 nmol/l, or 10 ng/ml) were double that of subjects who did not report pain.

These results support previous research showing an association between increased pain and poor vitamin D status. The researchers suggest that the active form of the vitamin may be associated with a reduction in inflammation. The results of this study also support the supposition that it is important to screen older patients reporting pain for vitamin D status so that appropriate interventions can be provided.

Hirani V. Vitamin D status and pain: analysis from the Health Survey for England among English adults aged 65 years and over. British Journal of Nutrition, FirstView Article: pp 1-5 Published online: 28 September 2011.