NUTRITIONAL VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTS DO NOT HELP TREAT ANEMIA IN DIALYSIS PATIENTS

Highlights
- Vitamin D2 supplements taken for 6 months did not reduce dialysis patients’ need for anemia drugs that stimulate red blood cell production.

Anemia commonly arises in patients with chronic kidney disease or kidney failure.

Washington, DC (December 17, 2015) — 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.

Study authors include Karen Majchrzak, MS, Hocine Tighiouart, MS, Richard Muther, MD, Toros Kapoian, MD, Doug Johnson, MD, and Daniel Weiner, MD.
Disclosures: The authors reported no financial disclosures. The trial was sponsored and conducted by Dialysis Clinic Inc, a not for profit dialysis provider.

The article, entitled “Ergocalciferol Supplementation in Hemodialysis Patients With Vitamin D Deficiency: A Randomized Clinical Trial,” will appear online at http://jasn.asnjournals.org/ on December 17, 2015. doi:10.1681/ASN.2015040468

The content of this article does not reflect the views or opinions of The American Society of Nephrology (ASN). Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s). ASN does not offer medical advice. All content in ASN publications is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to cover all possible uses, directions, precautions, drug interactions, or adverse effects. This content should not be used during a medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Please consult your doctor or other qualified health care provider if you have any questions about a medical condition, or before taking any drug, changing your diet or commencing or discontinuing any course of treatment. Do not ignore or delay obtaining professional medical advice because of information accessed through ASN. Call 911 or your doctor for all medical emergencies.

Founded in 1966, and with nearly 16,000 members, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) leads the fight against kidney disease by educating health professionals, sharing new knowledge, advancing research, and advocating the highest quality care for patients.

# # #

Tweet: Nutritional vitamin D supplements do not help treat anemia in dialysis patients.

Facebook: There is no role for nutritional vitamin D supplements in treating anemia in patients on hemodialysis, according to a study in Journal of the American Society of Nephrology.