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Omega-3 Plays Supportive Role in Heart Failure

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, April 27, 2010, abstracted from "Fatty fish, marine omega-3 fatty acids and incidence of heart failure" printed online March 24, 2010 in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Link - http://www.nowfoods.com/078959.htm

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) is defined as "an imbalance in pump function in which the heart fails to maintain the circulation of blood adequately." It affects more than 3 million people worldwide. With 400,000 new patients a year, CHF remains the most common diagnosis among hospitalized patients older than 65 years (1) and costs our healthcare system nearly $30 billion each year (2).

Fortunately, natural ways such as Coenzyme Q10 (3), vitamin D (4), Vitamin B-1 (5), and curcumin (6, 7), have been found to help with heart health. Now a new study (8) has found a supporting role of omega-3 fats in heart failure.

In the study, 36,324 women aged 48 to 83 participating in the Swedish Mammography Cohort (9) completed a 96-item food-frequency questionnaire. The researchers found that compared with women who did not eat fatty fish, those who ate less than 1 serving of fatty fish per week had a 14% decreased risk for heart failure, those who ate 1 serving/week had a 20% reduced risk and those who ate 2 servings/week had a 30% reduced risk). When they looked at total omega-3 fatty acid intake (that also included supplementation), those with the highest 20% of intake (570 mg/day) had a 25% reduced risk of heart failure compared to those with the lowest 20% of intake (140 mg/day).

A conflicting finding in the study was that consuming 3 or more servings of fatty fish per week only reduced heart failure risk by 9%. The researchers attributed this to the fact that only 3% of the population were in this consumption demographic (resulting in a small sample size) but were also older and heavier, more likely to have a history of high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and consumed more sodium and more red and processed meat. As for the demographics of the other serving groups, 12% of the women did not consume fatty fish, 25% ate less than 1 serving per week, 44% ate 1 serving per week, and 17% ate 2 servings per week.

Nevertheless, they concluded that "moderate consumption of fatty fish (1–2 servings per week) and marine omega-3 fatty acids were associated with a lower rate of first HF hospitalization or death in this population."

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