

New Study Supports Taking Omega-3s for Brain Health

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A new study concludes that taking omega-3 supplements not only supports cognitive health, but can also help to slow cognitive degeneration in older adults.

Aimed at tackling the rising prevalence of age-related forms of dementia such as Alzheimer's disease, The Multidomain Alzheimer's Preventive Trial (MAPT) studied omega-3 fatty acid supplementation alone or with multiple interventional efforts to gain insight into how diet and lifestyle choices play a role in brain function as we get older. MAPT's intervention strategy included mental stimulation, exercise, nutritional counseling, and social engagement.

For three years, the program involved almost 1,700 adults ages 70 and older who were experiencing mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Some of the problems initially experienced by study participants included subjective memory impairment and cognitive difficulty performing everyday tasks. Participants were randomly placed into a placebo group, a group that received 800 mg of omega-3 source DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) daily, a group that received the placebo treatment plus the multidomain intervention, and a final group that received a combination of both omega-3 supplementation and the multidomain intervention.

Progress in the program was first tracked after six months, then each year until the end of the three years. Along with checking a subject's DHA levels through blood work as well as the

occurrence of an ApoE4 genetic marker for cognitive issues, participants' memory skills, verbal articulacy and functional abilities were tested using a composite battery.

Overall, the study concluded that when coupled with healthy lifestyle habits, omega-3 supplementation supported great measurable improvement in cognitive functions. This was especially noticeable for those with the ApoE4 gene, which has been linked to the development of Alzheimer's. With the number of dementia patients increasing in spite of modern medical advancements (60–80% having Alzheimer's), this study can give medical professionals a better way to help their patients tackle and perhaps prevent the development of cognitive ailments.