

Dr. Geo Espinosa: Vitamin D for Longevity and Reducing Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms

By Dr. Geo Espinosa, *British Journal of Urology*



This recent study, published in the *British Journal of Urology*, shows low vitamin D levels are associated with lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men, especially during the winter. The following is an excerpt of a blog on the subject by contributor, Geo Espinosa, ND.

STUDY DETAILS

- 457 patients participated in a prospective study;
- Evaluation included medical history acquisition, physical examination and the completion of validated questionnaires, such as the IPSS, the Overactive Bladder Symptom Score (OABSS), and the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (I-PAQ);
- Laboratory test data, including serum anti-inflammatory markers, serum PSA, testosterone and glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) levels, urine analysis, uroflowmetry, with post-void residual urine volume (PVR) and prostate volume measurement using TRUS, and Serum 25-OH vitamin D level was assessed;
- Low Vitamin D levels aggravated overactive bladder (OAB) symptoms in men with LUTS all year, but particularly in winter. [Source]

My Take on Vitamin D in Men to Promote Longevity

First of all, vitamin D is not a “vitamin,” it’s a hormone. But, for simplicity, let’s keep calling it vitamin D.

I digress. As you know, vitamin D has two primary jobs: 1. It increases absorption of calcium (calcemic effect) in the body primarily to maintain bone health and; 2. It has its numerous actions on the body independent of calcium metabolism (non-calcemic effect), i.e., boost immunity, anti-inflammatory, maybe even anti-cancer, etc.

The most recent study associating vitamin D with LUTS is just one of a plethora of research suggesting its protective qualities. And, just so we are on the same page, vitamin D insufficiency is defined in most studies as below ≤ 30 ng/mL, and deficiency ranges from < 20 ng/mL to 10 ng/mL. As you will see, for my patients, I prefer a higher range.

A previous research study demonstrated that **men with the lowest vitamin D levels developed aggressive prostate cancer**. This scientific paper showed that those with 25-OH D blood levels lower than 12 ng/ml, over 3 ½ times more likely to develop aggressive prostate cancer (Gleason grade 4+4 or higher), while African-American (AA) men were more than 4 ½ times more likely to develop an aggressive form of the disease. AA typically have even lower D levels than non-AA men.

Another study looked at overall mortality associated with low vitamin D levels. In a 9-year follow-up study looking at over 13,000 adults 20 years or older, there was an increased rate of death in those with low Vitamin D levels (25[OH]D levels < 17.8 ng/mL).

The sweet spot, that is, where most participants died the least, was with D levels around 40 to 45ng/ml.

The same group of men were studied for 15-years, increase mortality became apparent in those with D levels steep below 40 nmol/L (16ng/ml) and higher than > 120 nmol/L (48 ng/ml). Decrease death rates were noticed in those with D levels between 32 and 40ng/ml.

Based on my clinical experience and analyzing hundreds of Vitamin D scientific papers, I have my patients at an optimal range of 40 to 50ng/ml.

Other studies have reported benefits from Vitamin D intake on prostate size and urinary problems. In a previous study, serum vitamin D concentration was reported to be lower in men with LUTS than in men without LUTS. In another review study, I published with a few other researchers we indicate a **moderate decrease in prostate size** amongst men with adequate blood vitamin D levels

Dr. Geo’s Clinical Takeaway on Vitamin D, Urinary and Prostate Health, and Longevity

- The primary source and most natural form of vitamin D is **sun exposure**.

- During the **winter months** it is virtually impossible to get enough vitamin D from sun exposure; thus supplementation should be considered. (it is difficult to get optimal D levels in the summer months, as well as most people, spend most of their time indoors these days)
- The highlighted study above on vitamin D and LUTS showed that men did better with higher vitamin D levels intake **all year**, but they suffered **more from LUTS in the winter** and did better after D levels increased with external use.
- Determining how much vitamin D supplementation one should take depends on a blood test, **25-Hydroxy Vitamin D**, *not* 1,25 Hydroxy Vitamin D. Also in the winter time, more is required. Some of my patients take up to 10,000 units a day only during the winter season.
- Blood levels of D should be **between 40 and 50ng/ml**. More is not better and can have diminishing returns. I emphasize the range between 40 – 50ng/ml because some holistic docs recommend higher levels – higher levels than 50ng/ml of vitamin D may be counterproductive based on this study.
- Keeping optimal levels of vitamin D (**40 – 50ng/ml**) has many health benefits, including relieving urinary symptoms, lowering the risk of aggressive prostate cancer and improving longevity.
- Vitamin D is fat soluble; it should be **consumed with a meal that contains fat or combined with fish oil** (a source of fat).