

News release: Breakthrough in ADHD treatment

Igennus

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New breakthrough clinical evidence demonstrates that the natural EPA & GLA essential fatty acid supplement Vegepa E-EPA 70 is an effective co-therapy treatment for children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who have been resistant to methylphenidate, commonly known as Ritalin. ⁽¹⁾

ADHD is thought to affect around 5-10% of school-aged children and it is estimated that a quarter of ADHD students have serious learning problems in areas including oral expression, listening skills, maths and reading comprehension. ⁽²⁾

The double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled trial, published in the *Journal of Child Neurology*, recruited 94 children clinically diagnosed with ADHD, who had been on Ritalin for six months or more, and standard behaviour therapy, but had no reported improvement in behaviour or academic learning.

These treatment-resistant children were then randomly assigned to receive supplementation with either two daily capsules of EPA & GLA, in the essential fatty acid supplement Vegepa (providing 560 mg eicosapentaenoic acid and 18 mg gamma-linolenic acid), or a placebo. All children continued to take Ritalin daily.



After six months, significant improvements were found in the treatment group when compared to the placebo group in the areas of restlessness, aggressiveness, completing work and academic performance. Statistically significant improvements in the following areas were not found at three months but were shown at six months, highlighting the critical point of length of treatment regime: inattention, impulsiveness and cooperation with parents and teachers.

Professor Basant K. Puri, of Imperial College London, a scientist and clinician who has been researching nutritional medicine for many years, commented: "Whilst previous studies have reported mixed outcomes of omega-3 supplementation in ADHD-diagnosed individuals, this is the first study to report highly significant findings from a combination of EPA with GLA. The efficacy of pure ethyl-EPA in combination with GLA further supports the concept that EPA is the primary omega-3 responsible for the psychoactive and neuroactive properties associated with fish oils. Further studies are certainly warranted, but these results are consistent with previous research on pure EPA [depression]. They would indicate that specific supplements can offer safe, natural and effective solutions either as alternatives to conventional drug treatments or as effective co-therapies.

These results have positive implications for parents concerned about reliance on standard drug treatment, where natural and safe adjunct treatments may provide some symptomatic relief for their children. Parents should discuss such an approach with their child's doctor and also, if possible, obtain professional nutritional guidance. It is important never to stop any existing medication without medical advice."

References

1. Perera H, Jeewandara KC, Seneviratne S & Guruge C. (2012) Combined Omega-3 and Omega-6 supplementation in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder refractory to methylphenidate treatment: a double-blind placebo-controlled study. *Journal of Child Neurology* 27:747-753.

2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: Methylphenidate, atomoxetine and dexamfetamine for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children and adolescents. *Review of Technology Appraisal 13 Technology Appraisal 98* 2006.