

Nutrition Discussion Forum

Dietary supplement use and mortality in a cohort of Swedish men – response from Åkesson and Wolk

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Dr Boucher raises the question of the use of vitamin D supplements in the prospective population-based study of mortality performed among 38 994 Swedish men⁽¹⁾. The main finding of this study was increased cancer mortality among smokers who used any supplement (unspecified) as compared with non-users. Among individuals with inadequate diet we observed that supplement users had decreased cardiovascular mortality as compared with non-users. The question brought up by Dr Boucher was whether vitamin D supplementation was examined specifically and whether mixed vitamin supplements in Sweden contain vitamin D. Moreover, were there any meaningful associations of vitamin D with the reported outcomes?

The use of vitamin D supplements was not specifically addressed at baseline in 1997 in our cohort. At that time, there were fewer mixed preparations on the market containing vitamin D than today. Nowadays most multivitamins in Sweden, as seems to be the case in the UK, contain vitamin D. The amount of vitamin D in these combined preparations, multivitamins or in combination with Ca, is generally 5–10 µg per pill (recommended dose is one pill per d). In contrast to many countries, preparations with a low dose

of only vitamin D specifically are not available at pharmacies. Our results mainly concerned the use of any unspecified dietary supplement so we cannot draw any conclusion regarding the association of vitamin D supplementation with mortality.

We declare no conflict of interest.

Reference

1. Messerer M, Håkansson N, Wolk A & Åkesson A (2008) Dietary supplement use and mortality in a cohort of Swedish men. *Br J Nutr* **99**, 626–631.

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