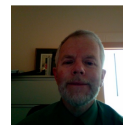


Henry Olders <henry.olders@mcgill.ca>

To: info@medicalpost.rogers.com

Omega-3 no help for Crohn's

9 May, 2008 10:14



This article by David Hodges (Medical Post 2008-5-6, p49) did not report on potential conflicts of interest: the research was paid for by a pharmaceutical company with, we assume, an interest in reducing the likelihood that its customers will use alternative treatments. In addition, most if not all of the researchers reported income from pharmaceutical firms marketing Crohn's disease treatments.

The report of the research referred to, by lead investigator Dr. Brian Feagan (1), reaches the conclusion that an earlier and smaller study by Beluzzi et al (2) was incorrect in concluding that treatment with omega-3s is beneficial. However, Dr. Feagan's report fails to mention the possibility that dietary intakes of pro-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids might have counteracted the anti-inflammatory effects of the omega-3 supplements in his studies.

For example, dietary consumption of the omega-6 linoleic acid (LA), found in seed oils, is considerably higher in the US, Canada, and Israel (where many of the sites in the Feagan study were located) than in Italy, the location of the Beluzzi study. As Hibbeln et al (3) point out, " It is likely that the success and failure of different clinical trials using similar doses of n-3 LCFAs were influenced by differing background intakes of the n-6 fatty acids LA and AA."

1. Feagan BG, Sandborn WJ, Mittmann U et al. Omega-3 free fatty acids for the maintenance of remission in Crohn disease: the EPIC Randomized Controlled Trials. JAMA. 2008;299:1690-1697.
2. Belluzzi A, Brignola C, Campieri M, Pera A, Boschi S, Miglioli M. Effect of an enteric-coated fish-oil preparation on relapses in Crohn's disease. N Engl J Med. 1996;334:1557-1560.
3. Hibbeln JR, Nieminen LR, Blasbalg TL, Riggs JA, Lands WE. Healthy intakes of n-3 and n-6 fatty acids: estimations considering worldwide diversity. Am J Clin Nutr. 2006;83:1483S-1493S.

Henry Olders, MD, FRCPC
Ste-Anne's Hospital
305, boulevard des Anciens-Combattants
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue QC H9X 1Y9
CANADA
514 457-3440 x3127
pager: 514 986-9310