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Low Vit D levels linked to multiple sclerosis

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In a new study, neurologists at the University at Buffalo have shown that low vitamin D levels may be associated with more advanced physical disability and cognitive impairment in persons with [multiple sclerosis](#).

The study results, reported at the American Academy of Neurology meeting, held earlier this month, indicated that: The majority of MS patients and healthy controls had insufficient vitamin D levels.

Clinical evaluation and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) images show low blood levels of total vitamin D and certain active vitamin D byproducts are associated with increased disability, brain atrophy and brain [lesion](#) load in MS patients.

A potential association exists between cognitive impairment in MS patients and low vitamin D levels.

The MRI study involved 236 MS patients -- 208 diagnosed with the relapsing-remitting type and 28 with secondary progressive, a more destructive form of MS -- and 22 persons without MS.

All participants provided blood serum samples, which were analyzed for total vitamin D (D2 and D3) levels as well as levels of active vitamin D byproducts. MRI scans performed within three months of blood sampling were available for 163 of the MS patients.

Results showed that only seven percent of persons with secondary-progressive MS showed sufficient vitamin D, compared to 18.3 percent of patients with the less severe relapsing-remitting type.

Higher levels of vitamin D3 and vitamin D3 metabolism byproducts (analyzed as a ratio) also were associated with better scores on disability tests, results showed, and with less brain atrophy and fewer lesions on MRI scans.

Bianca Weinstock-Guttman, MD, UB associate professor of neurology/Jacobs Neurological Institute and director of the Baird Multiple [Sclerosis](#) Center, is first author on the study. Commenting on these results, Weinstock-Guttman said: "Clinical studies are necessary to assess vitamin D supplementation and the underlying mechanism that contributes to MS [disease](#) progression."

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