

### Lower Levels of Omega-3 Speed Up Brain Aging

Reduced Omega-3 speeds brain aging. A study of cognitively normal patients in the Framingham Heart Study offspring cohort found smaller brain volumes associated with lower blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

Lower blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids are associated with smaller brain volumes and worse cognitive performance researchers reported. The findings suggest that people with low levels of the nutrients—found mainly in fish— have brains that appear to have aged faster than normal according to the study. The cognitive findings suggest they also are likely to lose some of their ability to think abstractly and remember some things. This was reported in the February issue of Neurology.

Lower blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids are “associated with markers of accelerated structural and cognitive aging”, the researchers concluded. For instance, the lower brain volumes were equivalent to about two years of structural brain aging.

The two omega-3 fatty acids under study were docosahexaenoic and eicosapentaenoic acid (DHA and EPA) which have been related to a reduced risk for dementia, the researchers noted.

All told, the study group included 1, 575 people with an average age of 67, who were free of dementia at the time.

The researchers analyzed red blood cell levels of DHA and the so-called omega-3 index, defined as the combination of DHA and EPA, seeking associations between omega-3 levels, imaging findings, and results on cognitive tests involving verbal memory, visual memory, executive function, and abstract thinking.

Also, they found the lower DHA levels also were associated with poorer scores on tests of visual memory, executive function, and abstract thinking.

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