

PRESS RELEASE

Nutritional supplements cannot prevent depression

Leipzig/Amsterdam – 8th, 2019: Daily intake of nutritional supplements cannot prevent depression. This is the key finding of the [MooDFOOD prevention trial](#) which is the largest randomized controlled trial to study the effects of nutritional strategies on the prevention of major depressive disorder.

15 European partners have been involved in the MooDFOOD study - the European Alliance Against Depression is one of them and supports the dissemination of results. The main findings are published in the [current issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association \(JAMA\)](#).

Over 1000 participants who were overweight or had obesity and were identified as being at elevated risk for depression, but who were not currently depressed, from four European countries (the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain) took part in the study. Participants were randomized to either take nutritional supplements containing omega-3-fatty-acids, calcium, folic acid, vitamin D, zinc, selenium or to a pill placebo, and half of participants also received a behavioural lifestyle intervention intended to change dietary behaviours and patterns.

Researcher Mariska Bot from Amsterdam UMC reported: "Daily intake of nutritional supplements over a year does not effectively prevent the onset of a major depressive episode in this sample. Nutritional supplements were not better than placebo. Therapeutic sessions aimed at making changes towards a healthy dietary behaviour did also not convincingly prevent depression". Dr. Bot is first author of a paper showing these results in the [recent issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association \(JAMA\)](#).

Prevention of depression through a healthy diet?

Results from the MooDFOOD trial do not support the use of nutritional supplements in order to prevent depression. "These results are of significance for the millions of people suffering from depression as well as the general population in Europe and beyond," emphasizes Prof. Dr. med. Ulrich Hegerl, co-author of the study and president of the European Alliance Against Depression. "Depression is a serious, often life-threatening disease which reduces life expectancy by approximately 10 years. As with any serious illness, both prevention and therapy should be based on evidence-based methods. These include medication and psychotherapy, but not nutritional supplements. It is understandable that people are looking for ways to reduce their own risk of developing depression. We now know that nutritional supplements are inappropriate for that matter. Also interventions intended to induce a healthy diet had no beneficial effects concerning depression".

MooDFOOD was funded by the European Commission and led by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The European Alliance Against Depression (EAAD), together with the EASO (European Association on the Study of Obesity) has been partner in the MooDFOOD project with the main task to disseminate the project results to stakeholders and the broad public.

Citizen and health professionals can find practical tools, together with the MooDFOOD project results and conclusions on the prevention of depression through nutrition on the project website: www.moodfood-vu.eu.

About:

MooDFOOD was a project funded by the European Commission (FP7-KKBE-2013-2-1-01) to gain a better understanding of psychological, lifestyle and environmental pathways underlying the multi-faceted, bidirectional links of food intake, nutrient status, food-related behaviour and obesity with depression.

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