

Treatment in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis," Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs Omega-3 Fatty Acids: 1992 The Journal of Rheumatology

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"Dietary Omega-3 Fatty Acid Supplementation and Naproxen"

Rheumatoid Arthritis: Study Evaluates Omega-3 and Nonsteroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID)

Numerous studies on rheumatoid arthritis and Omega-3 fatty acids (DHA and EPA) have indicated significant anti-inflammatory attributes of Omega-3s. However, due to the patient's use of non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAID) during clinical trials, a controlled double blind trial studied 67 patients with active rheumatoid arthritis to evaluate Omega-3's primary effectiveness in the presence of an NSAID, naproxen.

Studies have suggested that EPA and DHA, prevent the pro-inflammatory substance prostaglandin. This inhibition suggests Omega-3 as a main factor in the improvement of stiffness in patients by protecting the membrane within joints. NSAID's, such as Aspirin play a similar role and creates indefinite results when used during clinical trials.

To clarify EPA and DHA's affects with NSAID's the study divided the patients into three groups. Group1 was given an "Omega-3" placebo of corn oil, 7 grams a day for sixteen weeks and naproxen, 750mg a day for ten weeks ending with a stepwise reduction of naproxen to 0 mg after three weeks. Group 2 was administered the Omega-3 fatty acids: 3.8 g of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) 2 g of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and 750 mg of naproxen a day for sixteen weeks. Group 3 received the same amount of DHA and EPA as group two and the same dosage of naproxen as group one.

The study gave better indicative evidence on Omega-3 fatty acids with NSAID's. Group 2, the group supplemented with the most Omega-3 fatty acids, had significant improvement in morning stiffness as well as patient/physician global assessment. Groups 1 and 3 showed significant deterioration for most of the variables which suggests Omega-3 fatty acids can play a significant role in the reduction of rheumatoid arthritic pain.