

Numerous health organizations say congress must fund omega-3 DRI review

A consortium of trade, scientific and consumer groups has launched a campaign to establish an Institute of Medicine expert panel to establish dietary reference intakes (DRI) for EPA and DHA omega-3, and secure funding from Congress.

Long chain omega-3 fatty acids have been repeatedly linked to a number of health benefits, including brain development and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.

However a study published in the April edition of PLoS Medicine cited inadequate omega-3 status as the 6th leading cause of preventable death in the United States, leading to between 72,000 and 96,000 deaths each year. The study attracted considerable comment from nutrition specialists.

Industry commentators have drawn attention to the void created by the lack of Daily Required Intake (DRI). Until DRIs are established, neither consumers nor public health workers can know for sure just how much people should be consuming.

The Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s (GOED) and eight other organizations have now formally launched a petition to establish an expert panel to conduct a review.

They estimate that the review would cost \$1m to \$1.5m, which should come from the US and Canadian governments.

The matter is deemed especially topical in the US at the moment, since healthcare reform is at the top of the agenda and there is a shift towards emphasis on prevention.

GOED said the establishment of DRI could *“potentially result in billions of dollars in reduced healthcare costs and bring strong credibility to the nutrition industry”*.

Evaluation of cadavers in Thailand show link between low heart cell omega-3 and cardiovascular disease

The benefits of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids on reducing cardiac mortality are supported by numerous studies. A recent study conducted in Thailand tested the hypothesis that high levels of omega-3 in heart tissues are associated with low cardiac mortality. One hundred fresh cadavers were examined in this study. The cause of death, history of coronary heart disease (CHD), and fish consumption habits were obtained from death certificates, medical record profiles, and a questionnaire to people who lived with the subjects before death. In each cadaver, biopsies of cardiac tissues were taken from the interventricular septum for measurement of fatty acid.

Of the 100 cadavers (average age, 69 ± 13 years), 60 were men. The frequency of fish consumption was directly associated with omega-3 in heart tissues ($P < .01$). **In cadavers with a history of CHD, high levels of omega-3, particularly DHA, was associated with low cardiac mortality ($P < .05$).** Fish consumption is

associated with the level of omega-3 in cardiac tissues and a higher level of omega-3 is correlated with lower levels of cardiovascular disease mortality.

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Editors note: had this study come out in October we would have used it for our Halloween edition!

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