



Low Vitamin D Is Linked With High Hep B Levels

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There is a direct, inverse correlation between vitamin D concentration and hepatitis B viral load, MedPage Today reports. German researchers examined samples taken from 203 treatment-naive study participants with hep B between 2009 and 2012 and presented their findings in the journal *Hepatology*.

“Vitamin D helps maintain a healthy immune system, and there is evidence of its role in inflammatory and metabolic liver disease, including infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV),” lead investigator Christian Lange, MD, from Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Hospital in Frankfurt, said in a release.

Thirty-four percent of the group had severe vitamin D deficiency (less than 10 nanograms of hydroxyvitamin-D per milliliter of blood); 47 percent were insufficient in their vitamin levels (less than 20 nanograms); and 19 percent had sufficient levels (more than 20 nanograms). The average overall concentration of 25-hydroxyvitamin D was 14.4 nanograms per milliliter of blood.

Those with hep B viral loads of less than 2,000 international units (IU) per milliliter averaged a vitamin D level of 17 nanograms per milliliter. Participants with viral loads above that set point had an average of 11 nanograms of vitamin D per milliliter.

The researchers also discovered that hep B viral load was lower during spring and summer months when compared with fall and winter. Exposure to sunlight increases vitamin D levels.

However, the researchers stressed that this study only proves a correlation between vitamin D and hepatitis B levels, and not a causal effect. Furthermore, because the study only focused on those who had not received treatment for the virus, its findings cannot be widely generalized.

To read the MedPage Today report, [click here](#).

To read a release on the study, [click here](#).
