

Vit/min combo acts on diabetic neuropathy

September 10, 2007

The results of a new study have revealed that the under-consumption of micro-nutrients - essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants - can accelerate pain and other complications associated with diabetic neuropathy, a peripheral nerve disorder caused by diabetes, according to Mark Gostine, founder of Michigan Pain Consultants, a full-service US pain management practices, and Lawrence Pawl, a recognized oncologist. Of the 20.8 million reported diabetics in the country, an estimated 70%, or 14.6 million, have or will develop some form of diabetic neuropathy.

"While the over consumption of macro-nutrients, such as carbohydrates and fats, is recognized as a root cause of type 2 diabetes, we set out to determine if the under-consumption of select micro-nutrients might be the cause of diabetic complications such as neuropathy," said Dr Gostine. "What we found is that restoring a group of five dietary vitamins and minerals was very effective in alleviating a number of key symptoms, including burning, numbness and overall pain," he added.

Significant pain reduction reported

During the six-month long study, patients were asked to rate eight parameters using a modification of the Wong-Baker FACES Pain Rating Scale where pain is rated on a scale from one to 10. Participants in the study reported an average rating of 6.59 for "burning pain in hands and feet" before taking the combination of micro-nutrients and a 2.44 rating after 12 weeks, a 63% decrease. In addition, patients reported an average rating of 6.54 for "overall pain" before taking the combination of micro-nutrients and a 2.85 rating after 12 weeks, representing a 56% decrease.

"Our goal with this study was to better understand how to more effectively manage pain and other complications associated with diabetic neuropathy," added Dr Gostine. "It's not just that people are eating too much bad food; it's that they are eating too little of high quality foods. In other words, it's not what you eat; it's what you don't eat that hurts you," he said.

According to the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, 20.8 million people in the USA have diabetes, around 7% of the population. There are 10.3 million people aged 60 years or older, or 20% of all people in this age group, that have the disease. Diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death in the USA in 2002. In addition, 1.5 million new cases of diabetes were diagnosed in people aged 20 years or older in 2005.

Patients enrolled in the study were selected from a practice of podiatrists specializing in surgical and non-surgical care of the feet and ankles. 30 subjects took part.