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Can probiotics plus vitamin D supplements benefit people with schizophrenia?

APRIL 10, 2024 - Previous studies have questioned whether gut microbe imbalances and vitamin D deficiency may be linked to schizophrenia. New research published in *Neuropsychopharmacology Reports* now indicates that taking probiotics plus vitamin D supplements may improve cognitive function in individuals with the disease.

For the study, 70 adults with schizophrenia were randomized to take a placebo or probiotic supplements plus 400 IU vitamin D daily for 12 weeks. Severity of the disease and cognitive function were evaluated by tests called the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) and the 30-point Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), respectively.

A total of 69 patients completed the study. The MoCA score increased by 1.96 units in the probiotic-containing supplement group compared with the placebo group. Also, the percentage of patients with MoCA scores of 26 or higher (indicating normal cognition) rose significantly in the intervention group. Between-group differences in PANSS scores were not significant.

“Probiotics may be a novel way to treat mental disorders by regulating gut microbiota,” said corresponding author Gita Sadighi, MD, of the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, in Iran.

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