GrassrootsHealth
Moving Research Into Practice

How to Assess the Validity of Vitamin D Research

Based on Dr. Robert Heaney's "Guidelines for optimizing design and analysis of clinical studies of nutrient effects," published December 2013

When considering the validity of conclusions made by published vitamin D research, consider the following first:

Criteria #1 - Ask Yourself:

Does the paper mention vitamin D levels of participants at the beginning of the study? Were participants enrolled into the study only if their starting vitamin D level was below a specified cut-off level?

Criteria #2 - Ask Yourself:

Was the dose of vitamin D given to participants in the treatment group large enough to result in a change in vitamin D level?

Criteria #3 - Ask Yourself:

Are vitamin D levels reported for participant groups after the dose of vitamin D had been given, and especially, at the end of the trial?

Criteria #4 - Ask Yourself:

Did the study consider whether the change in vitamin D level was substantial enough to have an effect within that body system, on that particular outcome? **Were the study conclusions made based on the change in vitamin D level, not just the change in intake?**

Criteria #5 - Ask Yourself:

Were co-nutrients known to affect the disease outcome also tracked and supplemented if needed?

Other Important Questions to Ask Specific to Vitamin D Research:

Was vitamin D given on a daily or weekly basis (supplements in the form of vitamin D3)? Was the study period long enough to have an effect on the disease outcome being studied?