

# Vitamin D deficiency linked to increased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease

8 August 2014, by Isabel Gamarra



Vitamin D deficiency is associated with a substantially higher risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease in older people.

According to a study completed in collaboration with Dr. Paulo Chaves, associate professor and Leon Medical Center Chair in Geriatrics at FIU's Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, study participants who had severe vitamin D deficiency were more than twice as likely to develop [dementia](#) and Alzheimer's disease.

The study showed that those moderately deficient in vitamin D had a 53 percent higher risk of developing dementia and for those who were severely deficient, the risk was 125 percent higher. Similar outcomes were observed for Alzheimer's disease. Those that were moderately deficient were 69 percent more likely to develop this type of dementia while those who were severely deficient had 122 percent higher risk.

"Emerging evidence shows that vitamin D may contribute to health benefits beyond bone health.

This study documented a clear association of vitamin D levels with cognition in [older adults](#)," Chaves said. "Study results raise the important question regarding whether having proper vitamin D levels could help reduce the risk of dementia. Additional studies are needed to conclusively prove this."

Worldwide, there are 44 million cases of Dementia, with the number expected to triple by 2050. It is estimated that a billion people have low vitamin D levels, which puts them at greater risk for health problems.

Chaves is also director of the Benjamin Leon Center for Geriatric Research and Education at FIU. The center is dedicated to advancing the understanding of active aging and the prevention of frailty-related decline in older adults through research and education initiatives.

#### More information:

[www.neurology.org/content/earl...0000000000755.short](http://www.neurology.org/content/earl...0000000000755.short)

Provided by Florida International University

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