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# Correspondence

## Vitamin D Supplementation

Dr. Joel Kauffman is to be congratulated on his excellent article<sup>1</sup> regarding the benefits of assuring adequate vitamin D levels for optimal health including bone health, reduction of cardiovascular disease, suppression of certain forms of cancer, improved immune function, and more.<sup>1</sup> His bibliography was impressive.

As America has shifted from an agrarian society to industrialization and now technology, citizens from young to older have for various reasons experienced ever-decreasing periods of adequate sun exposure for the natural production of vitamin D. An additional factor has been the concern over the rise in skin cancer, particularly melanoma, with subsequent efforts to educate and encourage the public to use photo-protection with sunscreens or to avoid sunlight.

As a 63-year-old dermatologist who has benefited greatly from hormone replacement therapy for 8 years, I was experiencing a nagging unexplained problem with recurrent (every 9-12 months) atrial fibrillation. I had experienced seven episodes starting in 2000. A screening test revealed a very low vitamin D level of only 10 about 2 years ago. I have undergone two 3-month cycles of 50,000 units of vitamin D weekly, and this has elevated my vitamin D level to 48, which I maintain by taking 2,000 units of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> daily.

Bringing my D level up is the only variable changed in my life, and I am both surprised and pleased that I have not experienced atrial fibrillation now for 22 months. I do not take any prescription medications to prevent it.

Could it be that we need to perform still more studies in multiple areas of cardiovascular disease and other diseases as Dr. Kauffman and others suggest, to determine the benefits and optimal healthy levels of vitamin D? Reviews published elsewhere<sup>2-4</sup> would support such a contention.

Thanks to Dr. Kauffman for his article.

**Rick K. Wilson, M.D.**

Dallas, Texas

<sup>1</sup> Kauffman JM. Benefits of Vitamin D supplementation. *J Am Phys Surg* 2009; 14:38-45.

<sup>2</sup> Hoick MF. Vitamin D deficiency. *N Eng J Med* 2007;357:266-281.

<sup>3</sup> Autier P, Gandini S. Vitamin D supplementation and total mortality. *Arch Intern Med* 2007;167:1730-1737.

<sup>4</sup> Dobnig H, Pilz S, Scharnagl H, et al. Independent association of low serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D and 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D levels with all-cause and cardiovascular mortality. *Arch Intern Med* 2008;168:1340-1349.

## Smoking Bans and Air Quality

Thank you for your excellent and informative summer issue. The article on the evidence of smoking bans<sup>1</sup> was particularly interesting. I would like to know more about the smoking ban on airlines. Does this ban really improve air quality? Or might it make the air worse? When smoking was allowed and smokers sat in the back of the airplane, the airlines had to constantly bring in fresh air from the outside. Now that there are no smokers, the airlines don't have to bring in fresh air, and we breathe recirculated germ-filled air from all the passengers. Personally, I would rather breathe air with smoke in it than air with germs from 100 other passengers. The airlines may be glad for the no-smoking rule because not bringing in new air from the outside all during the flight probably means a saving in gasoline. What about it?

**Phyllis Schlafly**

St. Louis, Mo

**Author Reply:** These important questions have unfortunately been ignored. Authors who discuss bans on airlines simply argue that bans are necessary to protect customers and flight crews from second-hand smoke, and never entertain whether the singular focus on tobacco smoke has ultimately degraded overall air quality. Bans slow both the supply of and demand for improvements in air filtration systems; thus, it is likely that there are now more non-tobacco contaminants in airlines than would have occurred without smoking bans. These unintended consequences of bans on public health are simply ignored by ban advocates, and thus never enter into their research. Unfortunately, we do not know whether or not overall air quality has improved following bans.

**Michael L. Marlow, Ph.D.**

San Luis Obispo, Calif.

<sup>1</sup> Marlow ML. Epidemiologic and economic research, and the question of smoking bans. *J Am Phys Surg* 2009;14:58-60.