

PLACE/INSTITUTION:	University of Munich, Munich
TARGET SAMPLE:	223 patients with coronary artery disease

Omega-3 fatty acids reduce the progression of coronary artery disease by keeping arteries smooth and flexible

SUMMARY

Coronary artery disease is characterised by the build-up of plaques on the walls of the arteries supplying the heart, which causes a narrowing of the blood vessel. It is the most common cause of heart disease. A heart attack occurs when a plaque breaks away from the artery wall and causes a blockage which prevents the flow of blood to the heart. In this study 223 patients with coronary artery disease were supplemented with fish oil (Pikazol) or placebo, over a 2 year period. Those taking fish oil were given 3g omega-3 fatty acids per day for the first 3 months followed by 1.5g omega-3 fatty acids per day for the next 23 months. The severity of coronary artery disease was measured by x-ray imaging of the coronary arteries in patients before treatment and after 2 years of fish oil supplementation. Disease progression was illustrated by the diameter of the blood vessels; narrowing of the vessels indicates worsening of the disease while widening indicates disease reversal. After 2 years, the patients that had been taking fish oil showed less disease progression and more disease reversal than those in the placebo group.

CONCLUSION

Supplementation with around 1.5g omega-3 fatty acids per day for 2 years modestly reduced the progression of coronary artery disease.

REFERENCE:

Annals of Internal Medicine, 1999; 130:554-562

The effect of dietary n-3 fatty acids on coronary atherosclerosis: A randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. Von Schacky C, Angerer P, Kothny W, Theisen K, Mudra H.