

Supplementation of Fish Oil and Olive Oil in Patients With Rheumatoid Arthritis

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Abstract

Objective: This study evaluated whether supplementation with olive oil could improve clinical and laboratory parameters of disease activity in patients who had rheumatoid arthritis and were using fish oil supplements.

Methods: Forty-three patients (34 female, 9 male; mean age = 49 +/- 19y) were investigated in a parallel randomized design. Patients were assigned to one of three groups. In addition to their usual medication, the first group (G1) received placebo (soy oil), the second group (G2) received fish oil omega-3 fatty acids (3 g/d), and the third group (G3) received fish oil omega-3 fatty acids (3 g/d) and 9.6 mL of olive oil. Disease activity was measured by clinical and laboratory indicators at the beginning of the study and after 12 and 24 wk. Patients' satisfaction in activities of daily living was also measured.

Results: There was a statistically significant improvement ($P < 0.05$) in G2 and G3 in relation to G1 with respect to joint pain intensity, right and left handgrip strength after 12 and 24 wk, duration of morning stiffness, onset of fatigue, Ritchie's articular index for pain joints after 24 wk, ability to bend down to pick up clothing from the floor, and getting in and out of a car after 24 wk. G3, but not G2, in relation to G1 showed additional improvements with respect to duration of morning stiffness after 12 wk, patient global assessment after 12 and 24 wk, ability to turn faucets on and off after 24 wk, and rheumatoid factor after 24 wk. In addition, G3 showed a significant improvement in patient global assessment in relation to G2 after 12 wk.

Conclusions: Ingestion of fish oil omega-3 fatty acids relieved several clinical parameters used in the present study. However, patients showed a more precocious and accentuated improvement when fish oil supplements were used in combination with olive oil.

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