

Potential Treatment of Human Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease With Long-Chain omega-3 Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids

[Dimitrios G Bouzianas](#)¹, [Stella D Bouziana](#), [Apostolos I Hatzitolios](#)

Affiliations

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Abstract

Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is the most common chronic liver disorder in the Western world. Its prevalence has increased with the growing obesity epidemic, yet no definitive treatment has been developed, and optimal management remains a clinical challenge. Long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) have recently been proposed as a potential treatment for liver inflammation associated with fat accumulation. PubMed literature and the ClinicalTrials.gov database were reviewed for the effects of omega-3 PUFA treatment on NAFLD, from mechanisms to the results of preclinical studies, human studies, and unreported ongoing clinical trials, using terms such as NAFLD, nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, omega-3 fatty acids, and fish oil. Articles published over the last 3-4 years were emphasized, and relevancy was ensured by scanning their abstracts. Preliminary studies have confirmed an ameliorative effect, yet the translation of promising early data into therapeutic interventions will have to await the results of larger, properly conducted, ongoing clinical trials.

Keywords: NAFLD; fish oil; nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH); omega-3 fatty acids.

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