



MICRONUTRIENTS MAY REDUCE RISK IN HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY



During the transitional period of menopause, women experience symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, irritability, mood changes and sleep disturbances. This process can take between two and three years or as long as 15 years for some women, and with widely varying severity. About 20-25% of women have severe symptoms requiring treatment. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or menopausal hormone therapy (MHT), is a short-term treatment used to relieve menopausal symptoms experienced by women when the body stops producing the female hormones estrogen and progesterone. However, in 2002, a major clinical study called the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) was stopped because the researchers found that the risks of HRT vastly outweighed its perceived benefits. Over 80% of the women were immediately taken off of HRT because the treatment significantly increased the incidence of heart attacks, blood clots, and strokes. Later, it was also found that HRT increased the risk of certain types of cancers such as uterine, breast, and ovarian cancer, as well as liver and gall bladder diseases, thus requiring further treatment.

Since the cardiovascular and cancer risks were the main concern to halt the WHI study, we designed experiments to test whether a combination of specific micronutrients could affect these side effects associated with estrogen and progesterone treatment. Arterial plaque formation, which is responsible for the majority of the heart attacks, involves unnecessary growth and accumulation of smooth muscle cells, inflammation, and other factors at a particular location in the blood vessel and eventually blocks the blood flow. Similarly, a hallmark of all cancers is an uncontrolled growth of cells with the ensuing potential to invade other tissues.

Using cultured aortic smooth muscle cells, we studied various effects of micronutrients (vitamin C, lysine, proline, N-Acetyl-Cysteine and others) along with the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. While estrogen and progesterone increased the cell growth, the micronutrient combination not only inhibited this growth by 30%, it reversed those effects by a further 25% even when used with estrogen or progesterone.*

HRT increases the risk of several cancers. We noticed that cells treated with only estrogen or progesterone were able to invade and cause potential metastasis into the tissues. This invasion process was significantly reduced in the presence of the micronutrients by 78%. The micronutrients also reduced the inflammation markers which are a potential trigger for atherosclerosis and cancer. At the same time, the synergistic action of the micronutrients significantly increased the stability of the blood vessel walls reducing the risk of cardiovascular events. In another clinical pilot study, we have also shown the cardio-protective and synergistic effects of the micronutrients in reversing the progression of atherosclerosis.

Hormone replacement therapy should be assessed according to individual requirements and risk factors. Some recent studies claim that women can use HRT for symptom relief for a short period in early in menopause, or at a younger age. Yet, the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and cancers, specifically breast cancers, still prevail. Based on our study results, millions of women deciding to take HRT should also consider supplementing it with micronutrients to protect from serious side effects.

V Ivanov, et al., JANA, Vol 8, No.1, 2005

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The ground-breaking nature of this research poses a threat to the multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical "business with disease". It is no surprise that over the years the drug lobby has attacked Dr. Rath and his research team in an attempt to silence this message. To no avail. During this battle, Dr. Rath has become an internationally renowned advocate for natural health. Says he: "Never in the history of medicine have researchers been so ferociously attacked for their discoveries. It reminds us that health is not given to us voluntarily, but we need to fight for it."

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