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Researchers confirm Omega-3 EPA required for antidepressant benefits

DARTMOUTH, NS (Ocean Nutrition Canada) – Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago completed a review of previously published research on antidepressant benefits of Omega-3 essential fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). The review comprised a meta-analysis of 15 randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies in patients with depression and results were presented at the recent annual meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

The analysis indicated that DHA alone did not appear to offer any antidepressant benefits, where as patients taking EPA or a combination of EPA and DHA experienced clear antidepressant benefits.

John M. Davis, M.D., research professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago was quoted, “Our analysis clarifies the precise type of Omega-3 fatty acid that is effective for people with depression and explains why previous findings have been contradictory.” Davis continued, “The EPA predominant formulation is necessary for the therapeutic action to occur. The DHA predominant formulation does not have antidepressant efficacy.”

Jon Getzinger, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer, Ocean Nutrition Canada (ONC) said, “Many consumers still do not fully understand the role of EPA and DHA and the importance of having both EPA and DHA as part of a healthy diet. It is believed that EPA plays a functional role in the brain, while DHA plays a structural role.” Getzinger continued, “Consuming DHA alone which retrogrades poorly to EPA appears to be insufficient to provide the benefits associated with the combination of EPA and DHA that is found in fish oil. This analysis reinforces our understanding of the complementary roles that both EPA and DHA have in the maintenance of healthy brain function, in addition to the substantial scientific evidence supporting the benefits of heart health.”

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), approximately 20.9 million American adults suffer from various mood disorders, or about 9.5 percent of the U.S. population

age 18 and older in a given year. NIMH also reports that data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's 2006 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey indicates that close to sixty billion dollars was spent on mental healthcare just in the United States during that year.

Omega-3 EPA and DHA continue to be among the most researched ingredients, with over 14,000 published studies. As the amount of research demonstrating the wide-ranging benefits of Omega-3 EPA and DHA increases, studies like this and the recent recognition by European health authorities of a daily reference intake of 250 mg/day of EPA and DHA, emphasize the fact that both EPA and DHA from fish oil are important for overall well-being.

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About Omega-3:

Omega-3 is a family of essential fatty acids (EFA), including EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). Oily fish (such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel, and salmon) are the major known natural sources of Omega-3 EPA/DHA. ALA is found in plants, such as flax and chia. It is important to note that EPA and DHA are the primary contributors of the many health benefits associated with Omega-3. While the body can convert ALA into EPA/DHA, it does so very inefficiently (typically less than one percent), making it difficult to derive Omega-3-related health benefits from plant sourced ALA. Recent analysis also supports the long held belief that DHA alone is also insufficient to provide many of the benefits attributed to fish oils that typically contain both EPA & DHA. Furthermore, although Omega-3 EPA/DHA is important to overall good health, the human body is not able to produce sufficient quantities on its own, so supplementation is required, either by eating oily fish or foods fortified with Omega-3 EPA/DHA, or by taking fish oil supplements. Learn more about the health benefits of Omega-3 EPA/DHA at www.meg-3.com.

About Ocean Nutrition Canada Limited (ONC):

Ocean Nutrition Canada (ONC) is a privately held company, whose major shareholder is Clearwater Fine Foods Incorporated. Clearwater Fine Foods Incorporated is a diversified holding/investment company whose significant holdings include a controlling interest in Clearwater Seafood's Limited Partnership, the world's largest integrated shellfish harvester and processor.

ONC is the world's largest supplier of Omega-3 EPA and DHA ingredients from fish oil, marketed into the dietary supplement and food manufacturing markets. To date MEG-3® ingredients have been included in over 90 billion servings of food and supplement products worldwide. For more information about ONC visit www.ocean-nutrition.com, and for information on the health benefits of MEG-3® ingredients please visit www.meg-3.com.