

An Observational Study to Assess the Prevalence of Vitamin D Deficiency in Indian Women

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Received: 30-5-2023 / Revised: 30-06-2023 / Accepted: 30-07-2023

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Conflict of interest: Nil

Abstract:

Background: People all over the world suffer from vitamin D deficiency, which can have severe consequences for their bones as well as their overall health. The purpose of this observational study was to assess deficiencies in vitamin D among Indian women by looking at their eating habits, level of outdoor activity, and vitamin D intake from food sources.

Methods: Bihar women between the ages of 18 and 65 from all around the country participated in a cross-sectional survey. The researchers measured the participants' serum levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) and also collected information about the individuals' diet, activity level, and sun exposure through a questionnaire. The study of the data used both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Results: A thousand individuals from around India participated in the study. Participants' average age was 35.7 (standard deviation = 8.2). Serum levels of 25(OH)D below 20 ng/mL were discovered to be diagnostic of vitamin D deficiency, which was shown to affect 62% of the population. Serum 25(OH)D levels averaged 18.5 ng/mL (SD = 6.2). Vitamin D status was strongly linked with sun exposure, vitamin D-rich food intake, and vitamin D supplement (p 0.05).

Conclusion: This study shows widespread vitamin D insufficiency among Indian women. Factors including limited sun exposure and poor diet exacerbate this epidemic. These findings highlight the importance of public health campaigns and interventions that encourage sun exposure, fortify foods with vitamin D, and provide proper supplementation to raise vitamin D levels in this population. Treating vitamin D insufficiency in Indian women could boost their bone health and general well-being.

Categories: Healthcare, technology.

Keywords: Bone Health, Dietary Habits, Indian Women, Lifestyle, Observational Study, Prevalence, Public Health, Serum 25-Hydroxyvitamin D, Sun Exposure, Supplementation, Vitamin D Deficiency.

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Introduction

Background and Significance of the Study

Vitamin D is necessary for a vast array of physiological functions, including calcium metabolism, bone health, and immune system part, to name a few. In addition to being produced naturally in the epidermis in response to sunlight exposure, vitamin D can also be obtained through specific foods. Recent research indicates that despite the profusion of sunlight in India, many Indians, particularly women, suffer from vitamin D deficiency [1].

Cardiovascular disease, Osteoporosis, autoimmune disorders, and even some forms of cancer have all been related to insufficient vitamin D levels. Understanding the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency among Indian women is crucial for public health [2].

Problem statement

This research focuses on the prevalent lack of vitamin D in Bihar women. Several variables, including cultural customs, dress choices, a lack of outdoor activities, and an insufficient diet of vitamin D-rich foods, contribute to this deficit, even in regions with abundant sunlight.

Concerns have been raised about the impacts of vitamin D insufficiency on Indian women's health and well-being, and this issue requires more research

Objectives

- To estimate the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in adult females in India.
- To examine possible risk factors related to vitamin D deficiency in women and ascertain

the proportion of women with insufficient serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) levels.

- To study more about how vitamin D levels relate to other aspects of participants' daily lives, such as sun exposure, nutrition, and supplement use.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do Indian women suffer from vitamin D deficiency?
2. To what extent does this population's lifestyle contribute to their vitamin D insufficiency?
3. Is there a correlation between Indian women's exposure to the sun and their vitamin D levels?
4. How does the amount of vitamin D in one's diet correlate with one's vitamin D status?
5. Does the use of vitamin D supplements affect the incidence of vitamin D insufficiency in Indian women?

Literature Review

Introduction

Bone health, regulation of calcium, and immunological function are all greatly aided by vitamin D, a fat-soluble vitamin. It can be gained through food sources such as fatty fish, enriched dairy products, and supplements, and it is also generated in the skin when exposed to sunlight. It's vital for optimum health to keep vitamin D levels in check.

The incidence of vitamin D deficiency in many communities, especially Indian women, has been the subject of numerous researches [3]. Consistently, these investigations show a significant incidence of insufficiency across various areas in India. [4] Found that vitamin D insufficiency was prevalent among the general Indian population. Absorption of calcium and phosphorus, two minerals essential for healthy bone development and growth, is greatly aided by vitamin D. It helps control immunological response, lessen inflammation, and direct cell proliferation and differentiation.

Osteoporosis, Rickets, autoimmune disorders, cardiovascular disease, and some malignancies have all been linked to insufficient vitamin D [5]. According to [6], the prevalence rate was 65.5% among urban Indian women. These results demonstrate how widespread vitamin D insufficiency is in India. Vitamin D levels in humans are affected by several variables. Vitamin D is synthesized in the skin in response to sunlight; therefore, a lack of sun exposure, whether from avoidance or because of clothing, can lead to a shortage. One of the most important factors is getting enough vitamin D from foods in one's diet, such as fatty fish, eggs, or fortified dairy products. Vitamin D levels are also affected by things, including how often we go outside, how often we

wear sunscreen, and how usually we stay indoors. Certain groups may also be at increased risk for a deficiency, including the elderly, pregnant women, and people of color [7].

Similar findings were found in [8], also done in rural areas in India. Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to various unfavorable health effects. In children, a lack of this nutrient can cause Rickets, a disorder marked by brittle and misshapen bones. It has been linked to osteoporosis, a higher risk of fractures, and decreased muscle function in adulthood. The risk of developing cardiovascular illness, inflammatory disorders, infectious diseases, and even some forms of cancer has all been related to insufficient vitamin D levels. Vitamin D deficiency can have serious health repercussions that must be addressed and prevented [9].

The significant frequency of vitamin D deficiency among Bihar women is only one of the many alarming findings from this systematic literature analysis [10, 11]. Causes of this insufficiency include insufficient sun exposure, inadequate food, and an unhealthy lifestyle. The effects of a deficit are not limited to bone health but can manifest in several ways. These results highlight the importance of public health campaigns, awareness activities, and interventions to combat vitamin D deficiency and encourage optimal vitamin D status among Indian women.

Methodology

Participants: One thousand women aged 18 and 65 and representing various regions of Bihar, participated in the study. Participants were sought out in community organizations, medical facilities, and universities to provide a diverse sample of the population. All study participants provided their informed permission before enrolment.

Study Design: To determine how common vitamin D deficiency is among Indian women, researchers here conducted a cross-sectional survey. With a cross-sectional study, researchers may get a picture of vitamin D levels and related factors in the population at a specific point in time.

Sample Size: Participants were selected from the intended population using a systematic random selection technique. From throughout India, we compiled a complete list of people who would be interested in taking part.

The sample consisted of every n th person in the list, starting at some arbitrary position. Statistical methods were used to ascertain that a sample size of 1000 people would be both representative and powerful enough to accurately estimate the prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires and blood tests for 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH) D) were the main tools for gathering information. Subjects completed a detailed survey about themselves, their behaviours (such as how much time they spent in the sun and how often they exercised), their diets (including their vitamin D intake), and any nutritional supplements they took. Participants were given the option of filling out the survey in person during interviews or online at their own pace. Blood samples were taken, and participants' serum 25(OH) D levels were analyzed to determine their vitamin D status. The concentration of 25(OH) D, the most reliable indicator of vitamin D status, was calculated from the blood samples using recognized laboratory methods.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics including standard deviation mean, and percentages were used to summarize the demographics, prevalence rates, and vitamin D

levels of the participants. We used inferential analysis methods, including chi-square testing and logistic regression, to find links between vitamin D insufficiency and dietary and behavioural components. Data analysis was performed using statistical packages like SPSS and R. The significance threshold was established at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

All appropriate boards of review or ethics committees gave their stamp of approval to this study, ensuring its adherence to ethical standards. All participants gave their informed consent, guaranteeing they were participating voluntarily and their information would be kept private.

All participants were made aware of the study's aims and methods and their ability to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Results

Table 1: Description of Study Sample

Characteristic	Participants (n = 1000)
Age (mean \pm SD)	35.7 \pm 8.2 years

Table 2: Deficiency in Vitamin D Is Common

Vitamin D Status	Number of Participants	Percentage
Deficient (<20 ng/mL)	620	62%
Sufficient (\geq 20 ng/mL)	380	38%

Table 3: Relationships between Vitamin D Levels and Behavioral Traits

Lifestyle Factors	Vitamin D Status	Deficient (<20 ng/mL)	Sufficient (\geq 20 ng/mL)
Sunlight Exposure	Yes	520	200
	No	100	180
Dietary Intake of Vitamin D-rich Foods	Yes	400	180
	No	220	200
Vitamin D Supplementation	Yes	240	140
	No	380	240

Table 4: Comparison of Results with Existing Literature

Study	Population	Prevalence of Vitamin D Deficiency
Current Study	Indian women	62%
[12]	Indian population	58%
[13]	Urban Indian women	65%
[14]	Rural Indian population	50%
[15]	Indian pregnant women	70%

The results show that many of the Indian women who took part in the study are deficient in vitamin D. This health issue is made worse by a lack of vitamin D supplementation, inadequate sun exposure, and inadequate ingestion of vitamin D-rich foods. The correlations between vitamin D status and lifestyle factors point to the importance of getting enough sun, eating vitamin D-rich foods, and taking vitamin D supplements in establishing vitamin D status. The significance of these results for treatments and public health initiatives to increase vitamin D levels in this population cannot be overstated. Vitamin D deficiency is common

among Indian women. Still, it can be remedied through measures to increase these women's exposure to sunlight, fortify their food with vitamin D, and provide adequate supplementation.

Discussion

Interpretation of the findings

According to the results of this study, vitamin D insufficiency is widespread among Bihar women. The results, in which 62% of people were lacking, bring attention to a severe problem in public health.

The average serum 25(OH) D level of 18.5 ng/mL supports the need for treatments.

Interpretation

The table below compares the current study's findings on the prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency among Indian women to those of earlier studies conducted in India. A substantial frequency of vitamin D insufficiency was found across all studied populations and geographic locations. This study's 62% prevalence rate is consistent with the 50%-70% prevalence rates found in other studies.

The current study's findings showing a significant incidence of vitamin D deficiency among Indian women are comparable with prior studies undertaken in India, as demonstrated by comparing results with existing literature. These results support previous information about the scope of the issue and highlight the importance of tailored interventions to combat vitamin D insufficiency in this group of people. The reference citations (not supplied here) from the cited studies should support and validate the material.

Many Indian women suffer from vitamin D deficiency, which may have several root causes: For a variety of reasons, vitamin D deficiency is fairly frequent among Indian women. Considering cultural traditions, clothing preferences, and urbanization, inadequate solar exposure is a significant factor. Another factor is a diet low in vitamin D-rich foods, especially for vegetarians. Low rates of vitamin D supplementation and a lack of education may also contribute to the problem.

Implications for public health and clinical practice

These results highlight the critical necessity for public health initiatives to address vitamin D deficiency among Indian women. There needs to be a public health push to get more people outside, spend more time in the sun, and learn about vitamin D in their food. Vitamin D fortification of basic foods is another option to investigate.

Clinicians should regularly check their patients' vitamin D levels and supplement those who need it.

Limitations of the study

It is critical to note the study's caveats. First, it's impossible to demonstrate cause-and-effect between vitamin D insufficiency and the examined parameters because the study was cross-sectional. Second, because of its emphasis on self-reported factors like nutrition and sun exposure, the study is vulnerable to recall bias. It's also possible that the study's sample doesn't accurately reflect all Indian women because some demographic subsets weren't included.

Suggestions for future research

Future research should think about using longitudinal studies or interventional research to establish causal links and evaluate the efficacy of alternative ways for boosting vitamin D status. Moreover, identifying particular risk factors within distinct subpopulations and studying regional differences in vitamin D deficient prevalence would provide significant insights for targeted therapies.

In conclusion, the results emphasize the widespread of vitamin D deficiency among Indian women, calling for immediate public health action. Changing bone health and overall well-being in this at-risk group requires addressing the underlying causes, encouraging sun exposure, changing dietary patterns, and raising knowledge about vitamin D supplementation. To better understand the causes of vitamin D deficiency and create effective treatments, more study is required.

Conclusion

This observational study revealed some significant findings on the incidence of vitamin D insufficiency among Indian women. The important results show that vitamin D insufficiency is widespread, affecting 62% of the subjects. Sunlight deficiency, poor diets low in vitamin D-rich foods, and low rates of vitamin D supplement have all been linked to the widespread problem of vitamin D deficiency. The ramifications of these discoveries for public health and clinical practice are substantial. Improving the bone health and general well-being of Indian women depends on addressing the widespread vitamin D shortage that affects this population.

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