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**VITAMIN E MAY PROVE BENEFICIAL IN ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE
— Promising Studies Underway, Says Leading Researcher—**

NEW YORK, *January 27, 2005* — “There remains some legitimate evidence of benefit for the use of vitamin E in populations having Alzheimer’s disease, and studies with other neurological diseases including Down syndrome is warranted,” according to a prominent researcher in the field. Mary Sano, Ph.D., is Director of the Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center at New York’s Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She said the evidence of vitamin E’s benefit is elusive and “what we know from clinical trials suggests benefit in selected populations.”

Dr. Sano spoke at a health and science writers’ workshop on vitamin E and health at the New York Academy of Sciences sponsored by the Council for Responsible Nutrition. In addition to her position at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Dr. Sano is also Director of Research and Development at the Bronx Veterans Administration Hospital in New York.

Cases of Alzheimer’s disease are increasing because the population in whom it occurs is increasing. Individuals aged 65 and over comprise the fastest growing population of this country. The more seniors we have, the greater the incidence and prevalence of Alzheimer’s disease. Furthermore, Dr. Sano said, people are living longer with the disease.

The researcher told the group, “The diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease is preceded by a 3-5 year period of mild but significant cognitive impairment.” She added that an interesting component of the problem is that “the changing technology required for routine activities carries a high cognitive demand.”

Dr. Sano described a recent study comparing vitamin E and selegiline in Alzheimer's disease patients. Selegiline is a medication used in Parkinson's disease, and because it may have a neuroprotective component, it is now being studied in Alzheimer's. The researcher and her group mounted a two-year double-blind study among 341 moderately impaired patients. There were three treatment groups: selegiline (10 mg per day), vitamin E (2000 IU per day), and a combination of the two, as well as a placebo group. Patients were followed until they experienced a loss of basic activities of daily living (ADL), were institutionalized, developed severe dementia, or they died.

There was no effect on cognition in those patients on vitamin E, however their group showed the most improvement in the other criteria. They were able to remain out of institutions longer, and they experienced 25% less deterioration in their activities of daily living than did the other patients.

Antioxidant vitamin E holds promise because of the oxidative damage inherent in Alzheimer's disease. The scientist explained that the disease process causes damage to lipids, proteins, and DNA and RNA. It causes significant changes in the brain, resulting in loss of synapses, neuronal dysfunction, and death. Since Vitamin E is an antioxidant, it acts to scavenge up damaging free radicals. Laboratory experiments show that the vitamin limits the oxidation of lipids in cell membranes, enhances blood flow within brain cell cultures and also reduces cell death in cell cultures.

Dr. Sano doesn't recommend such high doses of vitamin E for the general population, and said that there is no strong evidence that it can prevent Alzheimer's in healthy individuals, only in those who have the disease. Her group is now studying patients with Down syndrome. These persons get Alzheimer's disease early, often before the age of 50. She's hoping her research with these patients will determine if vitamin E can be of benefit, and provide clues for preventing the disease in a healthy population.

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Note to Editor: The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing dietary supplement industry ingredient suppliers and manufacturers. CRN members adhere to a strong code of ethics, comply with dosage limits and manufacture dietary supplements to high quality standards under good manufacturing practices. For more information on CRN, visit <http://www.crnusa.org>.