

## **Study Suggests Vitamin D Screening and Appropriate Supplementation Indicated for All Cancer Patients**

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Vitamin D deficiency was found to be prevalent in cancer patients regardless of nutritional status, according to the results of a recent study conducted at Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA). Based on these results, CTCA researchers determined that screening for vitamin D deficiency and aggressive vitamin D repletion should be considered for all people with cancer.

"While emerging evidence suggests the protective role of vitamin D in cancer, vitamin D status is not routinely assessed in cancer patients despite the high prevalence of malnutrition in this population," said Carolyn Lammersfeld, national director of nutrition for CTCA and a principal investigator in the study.

During the study, a consecutive case series of 737 cancer patients (302 male and 435 female) seen at CTCA between January - June 2008, were assessed for nutritional status and categorized into three distinct classes of nutritional status: well nourished, moderately malnourished and severely malnourished. The mean age at presentation was 55.7 years (SD = 10.2) and the most common cancer types were lung (133, 18%), breast (131, 17.8%), colorectal (97, 13.2%), pancreatic (86, 11.7%), prostate (44, 6%) and ovarian (38, 5.2%).

Before the study, the researchers hypothesized that malnutrition could contribute to vitamin D deficiency and therefore expected mean serum 25-hydroxy-vitamin D [25(OH)D] levels to be significantly lower in malnourished oncology patients. However contrary to what they expected, vitamin D deficiency was found to be prevalent in cancer regardless of nutritional status.

This study was presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting, May 29-June 2, 2009, and was publicly released on ASCO's Web site, [www.asco.org](http://www.asco.org), on May 14, 2009.