

There's New Light At The End Of The Carpal Tunnel

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS), a condition marked by abnormal sensations in one or both hands due to compression of the median nerve, is arguably the most common peripheral mono-neuropathy and has now been shown to be effectively treated by combining a time-honored antioxidant with an essential fatty acid.

In a European clinical trial published this year, 112 patients with severe CTS were divided into two groups for 90 days: one receiving a combination alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) 600 mg/day with gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) 360 mg/day while the other group ingested a multivitamin B complex which contained 150 mg of B6, 100 mg of B1, and 500 micrograms of B12. The ALA/GLA group did substantially better than the other group when assessed from multiple perspectives, including significant reductions in both reported symptoms and functional impairment using scales and questionnaires that have demonstrated reliability in previous studies. Electromyography, which detects the electrical potential generated by muscle cells, also showed a statistically significant improvement in the ALA/GLA group but not the multivitamin group.

For those unacquainted with these nutrients, both ALA and GLA have impressive histories of clinical application. Alpha-lipoic acid is a water-soluble and fat-soluble anti-oxidant which has the ability to recycle other antioxidants, such as ascorbic acid and glutathione, thereby ultimately recycling vitamin E. It is well established for improving glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity and was even successfully used to mitigate oxidative stress and improve organ function among children who were exposed to radiation during the Chernobyl disaster. Gamma-linolenic acid is an omega-6 essential fatty acid shown to help relieve premenstrual breast pain, premenstrual syndrome of bloating, irritability, and depression as well as have positive effects on eczema and slowing deterioration in multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Shawn Carney is a naturopathic physician specializing in science-based family medicine at Whole Health Associates in the Hartford Hospital Avon Wellness Center. Call 860-674-0111 or visit www.wholehealthllc.com for more information. See ad on back cover.

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