



## Psychiatry Research

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# Short-term supplementation of acute long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids may alter depression status and decrease symptomology among young adults with depression: A preliminary randomized and placebo controlled trial

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### Highlights

Study examined effects of omega-3 fatty acids on depressed undergraduates.

Randomized double blind placebo controlled trial.

The treatment group had a significant reduction in depression symptomology.

67% of treatment group no longer met criteria for depression after supplementation.

The current study examined the psychological effects of acute and low-dose long-chain omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPUFAs) supplementation on young adults with depressive symptoms. Participants ( $N=23$ , M age (SD)=20.2 (1.25), 78% female), with a Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) score of greater than 10, were randomly assigned to a placebo (corn oil) or LCPUFAs group (1.4 g of eicosapentaenoic and docosahexaenoic acids) and were instructed to consume the assigned capsules daily for 21-days. BDI was completed prior to supplementation and at day 21. Group differences in depression status on day 21 were analyzed using chi-square tests. After 21-days of supplementation, there was a significant difference in depression status between groups. 67% of the LCPUFAs no longer met criteria for being depressed, while only 20% in the placebo group were no longer depressed. A mixed ANOVA revealed a significant group  $\times$  time interaction for BDI scores. Post-hoc analyses revealed the LCPUFAs group had a significant reduction in BDI scores over time, while the placebo group's scores did not significantly change. These findings suggest that LCPUFAs may alter depression and depressive symptomology in young adults in a relatively short amount of time.

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## Keywords

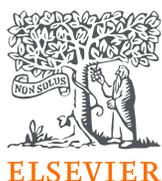
Omega-3 fatty acids; Depression; Undergraduates

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