



September 2012

Omega-3s for BPD

As a psychiatrist who incorporates diet and dietary supplements in my practice, I appreciated the excellent review of omega-3 fatty acids for psychiatric illness (CURRENT PSYCHIATRY, September 2012, p. 40-45; <http://bit.ly/RDK7Hv>). It's far better to support normal biochemistry and avoid side effects whenever possible.

However, regarding treatment of borderline personality disorder (BPD), the author stated that omega-3 fatty acids are ineffective. I have found them clinically useful for BPD. In the 2003 study the author cited, Zanarini et al¹ concluded "E-EPA [ethyl-eicosapentaenoic acid] is a nutraceutical agent that is both well tolerated and may be efficacious for the treatment of moderately disturbed women with borderline personality disorder. Ninety percent of those taking this compound were able to complete the entire 8-week trial and reported no clinically relevant side

effects. Those treated with this compound also experienced a significantly greater reduction in their overall aggression as well as their depressive symptoms than those treated with placebo." These results suggest that omega-3 fatty acids may be an effective monotherapy for women with moderately severe BPD.

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Reference

1. Zanarini MC, Frankenburg FR. Omega-3 Fatty acid treatment of women with borderline personality disorder: a double-blind, placebo-controlled pilot study. *Am J Psychiatry*. 2003;160(1):167-169.

The author responds

Dr. Cass is correct. Zanarini et al did suggest that omega-3 fatty acids are beneficial in reducing aggression and depressive symptoms in women with moderate borderline personality disorder who were not prescribed other psychotropics. However, the study was small (N = 30), and further research is needed to support these findings.

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Prison and the mentally ill

For years, I have been telling people what E. Fuller Torrey revealed in his 2010 report and what Dr. Nasrallah wrote about in his October 2012 editorial ("Psychiatry and the politics of incarceration," From the Editor, CURRENT PSYCHIATRY, October 2012, p. 4-5; <http://bit.ly/FTE1012>). It has been my experience that people falsely believe the mentally ill are dangerous and unpredictable or lazy and uncooperative and therefore are properly housed in prisons. Such a

false idea seems to have pervaded Americans' thoughts about the mentally ill to such a degree that a vast educational program would be needed to change this idea.

How sad is it that a nation founded on freedom has come to this.

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Words of thanks

Thank you for making your wonderful journal available to all psychiatrists. I look forward to receiving each issue of CURRENT PSYCHIATRY. Please keep this educational, balanced journal coming.

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