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# Link Between Vitamin D and ICU Outcomes Unclear

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Another theory suggests that a low level of vitamin D is simply a signal of the severity of disease, not a direct influence on disease pathology.

Some observational data have shown an association between low levels of vitamin D and outcomes in COVID-19 patients (D'Avolio et al, Lau et al, Meltzer et al, Merzon et al, Panagiotou et al), but some have shown no association (Hastie et al, Raisi-Estabragh et al).

RICE conducted a search of Clinicaltrials.gov immediately before his presentation on Sunday, and found 41 ongoing interventional studies — "not observational studies" — looking at COVID-19 and vitamin D.

"They're recruiting, they're enrolling; hopefully we'll have data soon," he said.

Researchers have checked a lot of boxes with a resounding yes on the vitamin D question, so there's reason to think an association does exist for ICU patients, whether or not they have COVID-19.

"Is there a theoretical benefit of vitamin D in the ICU?" Rice asked. "Yes. Is vitamin D deficient in patients in the ICU? Yes. Is that deficiency associated with poor outcomes? Yes. Can it be replaced safely? Yes."

However, "we're not really sure that it improves outcomes," he said.

### A Chronic Issue?

"Do you think it's really an issue of the patients being critically ill with vitamin D," or is it "a chronic issue of having low vitamin D?" asked session moderator Antine Stenbit, MD, PhD, from the UC San Diego School of Medicine.

"We don't know for sure," Rice said. Vitamin D might not have a lot of acute effects; it might have effects that are chronic, that work with levels over a period of time, he explained.

"It's not clear we can correct that with a single dose or with a few days of giving a level that is adequate," he acknowledged.

Rice is an investigator in the PETAL network. Stenbit has disclosed no relevant financial relationships.

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