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Fish oil effects on kids' IQ questioned

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A new study conducted at the University of Granada in Spain says taking fish oil during pregnancy has nothing to do with the babies' intelligence.

Previous studies said adding omega-3 fatty acids including DHA and EPA to pregnant women's diets could have a positive impact on both the "visual and cognitive development of the child."

The new study, however, showed that taking fish oil during pregnancy does not seem to increase the intelligence of their progeny once the kids hit six years of age.

Researchers gave the pregnant women either fish oil, fish oil with folate, folate alone, or a placebo and six years later tested their children's intelligence through a series of definite tests.

Findings showed that children of the mothers in any of the four groups had no significant difference regarding their IQ.

"We observed no significant effect of supplementation on the cognitive function of children, but maternal DHA status may be related to later cognitive function in children," Dr. Cristina Campoy and colleagues wrote in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Scientists didn't record and analyze the studied kids' diet from the time of their birth until they turned six years old, which may possibly have influenced their brain development after birth.

Some other studies have recently questioned the benefits of taking fish oil during pregnancy. A recent Australian study found that DHA did not help the visual development of babies while two other studies say the supplements neither prevent postpartum depression in mothers nor improve cognitive development or acquisition of language in babies.

Some experts, however, believe there are other reasons to take omega-3s during pregnancy besides hoping that the kids may become smarter.

The conflicting studies may confuse some women in deciding whether to take the fish oil supplements during pregnancy or not. Experts say the question may not be answered with confidence by now but women may get the best advice from their trusted doctors.

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