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## **Study Reveals Most People Think They Get Omega-3s from Balanced Diet, Yet 98% Have Sub-Optimal Omega-3 Levels**

*Despite adequate knowledge, overall health and diet, people should take action to ensure proper O3 levels*

**September 15, 2017, New York, New York-** Data from a two-country scientific study that compared adults' perceptions of their own diets and importance of Omega-3 fatty acids (O3) vs. O3 blood levels (Omega-3 Index) was published in *Nutrients*. The study, conducted by the Global Nutrition and Health Alliance (GNHA), found that despite adequate knowledge of the health benefits and food sources of O3, 98 percent of U.S. and German adults had O3 levels below the optimal range of 8.0+<sup>1</sup> using the study test method.

"In the field of nutrition we often wonder why people do not choose to eat according to recommendations. Our results suggest that apart from knowledge, other factors may influence the intake of omega-3 fatty acids," said Regan Bailey, associate professor of nutrition science, Purdue University. "It is essential to identify strategies for closing the gap between intake and concentration of omega-3 fatty acids to help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and help support brain, joint and eye health" †.

As opposed to studies that measure the benefits of O3 as if it was a drug or treatment, the GNHA's study measured the dietary knowledge and habits of 200 healthy U.S. and German adults, emphasizing awareness and intake of O3. All participants agreed that a balanced diet is

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<sup>1</sup> Thuppal, S.V.; von Schacky, C.; Harris, W.S.; Sherif, K.D.; Denby, N.; Steinbaum, S.R.; Haycock, B.; Bailey, R.L. Discrepancy between Knowledge and Perceptions of Dietary Omega-3 Fatty Acid Intake Compared with the Omega-3 Index. *Nutrients* **2017**, *9*, 930.

† Supportive, but not conclusive, research shows that consumption of EPA and DHA Omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

important for health, but only half believe they actually eat one.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, 82 percent of people believe they don't need to take a supplement to have a balanced diet, but when it came to O3, study results show that almost none of them have an O3 level in the optimal range of 8.0+.<sup>1</sup>

"Omega-3s are considered "essential" because the body needs them to function but can't create them on its own," said GNHA founding member Nigel Denby, RD, Head of Dietetics at Grub4Life in London. "They must come from dietary sources but the reality is, diet alone may not be enough, especially if you are like many people who don't have access to fresh, quality foods and their nutritional content."

O3 levels were measured using the Omega-3 index (O3-I), a biomarker for O3-FA and is calculated as a sum of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) content in the red blood cell membranes, and reflects the long-term intake of EPA and DHA.<sup>2,3,4</sup> An O3-I of  $\geq 8\%$  is the recommended optimal level range; in comparison, an O3-I in the 4-8% range is not considered ideal for heart health.<sup>3</sup>

### **Global Nutrition & Health Alliance**

The GNHA is a global, multi-disciplinary group of physicians and nutrition experts working together to educate the public and professionals about optimal nutrition as part of a healthy lifestyle, including the contribution and interpretation of realistic and science-based recommendations on the appropriate use of vitamins and mineral supplements.

The GNHA is supported by an unrestricted grant from Reckitt Benckiser, the makers of nutrition products and dietary supplements. For more details on the GNHA, visit [www.globalnutritionhealth.org](http://www.globalnutritionhealth.org).

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<sup>2</sup> Flock, M.R.; Skulas-Ray, A.C.; Harris, W.S.; Etherton, T.D.; Fleming, J.A.; Kris-Etherton, P.M. Determinants of erythrocyte omega-3 fatty acid content in response to fish oil supplementation: A dose-response randomized controlled trial. *J Am Heart Assoc* 2013, 2, e000513.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, W.S. The omega-3 index as a risk factor for coronary heart disease. *The American journal of clinical nutrition* 2008, 87, 1997s-2002s.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, W.S.; Von Schacky, C. The omega-3 index: A new risk factor for death from coronary heart disease? *Prev Med* 2004, 39, 212-220