

Summary

Diet and aggression regulation

Between late 2005 and February 2007, a randomized controlled trial was conducted in a number of Dutch correctional institutions. Aim of the study was to investigate whether it was possible to influence the level of aggression, and the psychological condition of young adult offenders by altering their nutritional status. To that end 221 young adult offenders used food supplements during at least one month, up to three months. These supplements (in the experimental condition) contained essential fatty acids (ω -3 en ω -6) and a multitude of vitamins and minerals. The results suggest a (statistically significant) decrease in the numbers of incident reports in the experimental condition (n=115) as compared to a placebo condition (n=106). These findings are in line with the results of an earlier British study of Gesch et al. (2002a). This study was the immediate cause of the present study.

Several aggression questionnaires however didn't reveal significant improvements, so concluding that the intervention is aggression reducing is premature at least. Moreover, no significant improvements in psychological functioning could be demonstrated.

The improvement on incident reports is nevertheless regarded as promising by the authors, and follow up research, preferably among violent offenders, with a focus on aggression and role violating behaviour, is recommended.