

Low Vitamin D Tied to Aging Problems

By Nicholas Bakalar

A new study has found that low vitamin D levels in people over 55 are associated with an inability to perform ordinary tasks of daily life.



Dutch researchers studied two groups of older people — one of 725 men and women aged 55 to 65, and another of 1,237 older than 65 — to see if they could walk up or down a 15-step staircase, dress and undress, stand from a sitting position, cut their toenails, walk outside unaided for five minutes, and use their own or public transportation. Then

they did blood tests for vitamin D levels.

After controlling for factors including age, physical activity and chronic diseases, they found that in both groups, a vitamin D level below 20 nanograms per milliliter was associated with an increased number of disabilities compared with those with a normal level (above 30). The study was published online in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*.

The lead author, Dr. Evelien Sohl of the VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam, said that the study does not establish that low vitamin D is the cause of disability. “Maybe vitamin D supplements would be of benefit,” she said. “But before we can assume this, we have to test it in randomized controlled trials.”