

*Omega-3 treatment of childhood depression: a controlled, double-blind pilot study," Nemets H, Nemets B, et al, Am J Psychiatry, 2006; 163(6): 1098-100. (Address: Beer-Sheva Mental Health Center, PO Box 4600, Beer-Sheva, Israel. E-Mail: belmaker@bgu.ac.il ).*

In a randomized, placebo-controlled, pilot study involving 20 children between the ages of 6 and 12 with childhood depression, results suggest that supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids may have therapeutic benefits. The children were randomized to receive daily omega-3 supplementation (a combination of eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid, available over-the-counter) or placebo for 1 month. At baseline, 2, 4, 8, 12, and 16 weeks, the children were examined using the Children's Depression Rating Scale, Children's Depression Inventory, and Clinical Global Impression. At intervention end, 7 of the 10 children who received omega-3 supplementation showed at least a 50% reduction in depression scores, compared to baseline. No improvements in scores were observed in the placebo supplemented children. Additionally, 4 of the omega-3 supplemented children achieved remission. Thus, this study suggests that supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids may benefit children suffering from depression.