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## FOR YOUR INFORMATION... A SERVICE FOR LIFE-SPAN PROVIDERS

*Dear Life-Span Members:*

Very good news from Europe:

This is a 3 year prospective study on the efficacy of 1500 mg of glucosamine sulfate for osteoarthritic sufferers, published recently in the prestigious Lancet. At this dose there is prevention of narrowing in the knee joints and significant reduction in arthritic pain and stiffness (*I suggest that the results would have exceeded 25% improvement had they concomitantly made use of other proven antiarthritic nutrients such as MSM, chondroitin sulfate and/or Boswellia serrata*).

Conclusion & strong recommendation: All 20,000,000 American osteoarthritics should be taking at least 1500 mg of glucosamine sulfate, in conjunction with other proven nontoxic, antiarthritic supplements, indefinitely on a daily basis. I have included my notes in italics in the article below. Read on....

*James Braly, MD.*

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**Friday, 26 January, 2001**

### [Glucosamine sulfate] Supplement 'eases crippling disease'

Osteoarthritis can be severely disabling

*[affecting some 20 million Americans]*

Scientists have produced evidence that a food supplement

*[glucosamine sulfate at a dose of 1500 mg a day over a 3 year period]*

can help to reduce the long-term suffering associated with the crippling disease osteoarthritis.

Osteoarthritis, or degenerative joint disease, is the most common form of arthritis, most often affecting middle-aged and older people.

The disease, which can cause severe disability and pain, tends to develop in the joints of the neck, lower back, knees, hips and fingers. However, it may also occur in joints that have been previously injured, or subjected to prolonged heavy use.

Experts estimate that 60% of those aged 65 have moderate to severe osteoarthritis in at least one joint.

It is caused by the degeneration of the cartilage, the protective material that stops bones rubbing together in the joints.

The dietary supplement glucosamine sulphate has been shown to reduce the severity of symptoms in the short term. But now researchers have achieved the same effect in the longer term.

### **Belgian research**

The work was carried out by Professor Jean Reginster and colleagues from CHU Centre Ville, Liege, Belgium.

Patients with the disease either received a daily 1,500 mg dose of a form of the compound, or a placebo over a period of three years. The researchers took radiograph images of the patients' knees while lifting a weight after one and three years. They found that the space between the joints of the knee narrowed significantly over time in the 106 patients who received the placebo. After three years the average loss was 0.31mm. **However, there was no such narrowing among patients on glucosamine sulphate. Those patients who completed the full course of treatment showed a 20-25% improvement in their symptoms, compared with slight worsening of symptoms in the placebo group.**

### **Expert view**

Dr Madeleine Devey, scientific secretary of the Arthritis Research Campaign, said many people with osteoarthritis had been taking glucosamine sulphate for many years. She said a small scale trial of the supplement in the UK found that it had a small beneficial impact on patients who were in mild pain - but not those in severe pain. A larger scale study is currently being undertaken in the US.

Dr Devey told BBC News Online: "Many people with osteoarthritis take glucosamine sulphate, but until now the evidence that it does any good is very inconclusive. "These results are encouraging, but we would welcome properly conducted clinical trials to answer the question one way or another.

"Osteoarthritis causes a great deal of social exclusion for elderly people who cannot get out."

Dr Tim McAlindon from Boston University Medical School, USA, said the study was a landmark piece of research.

He said: "It is time for the [medical] profession to accommodate the possibility that many nutritional products may have valuable therapeutic effects and to regain the credibility of the public at large".

The only current treatments for osteoarthritis are painkillers and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, which are also given to dull pain. Some patients undergo joint replacement surgery. The best way to minimize risk is to take regular exercise and to lose excess weight. It is also a good idea to wear proper trainers when taking exercise to protect the ankle and knee joints.

The research is published in The Lancet medical journal.