

Study by Dr Niamh Aspell, Dr Eamonn Laird and Associate Professor in Nutrition at Trinity College, Maria O'Sullivan find that over a quarter of adults over 50 deficient in Vitamin D.

Over a quarter of adults aged 50+ are deficient in vitamin D according to researchers from Trinity College Dublin who announced their findings today (Thursday, June 13th). Over half (57%) had inadequate serum vitamin D levels, of which 26% were classed as vitamin D deficient. Vitamin D has a known role in bone health, with growing evidence for beneficial effects on muscle strength and other non-skeletal outcomes. The study was recently published in the international, peer-reviewed journal *Nutrients*.

Better understanding of factors that contribute to vitamin D deficiency is needed to identify people most at-risk. Determinants of deficiency identified in this new study were female gender, advanced age (80+ years), smoking, non-white ethnicity, obesity and poor self-reported health. Researchers therefore identified a profile of older people more likely to be at risk of vitamin D deficiency. Being of a healthy weight, retired, engaging in regular vigorous physical activity, vitamin D supplement use, sun travel in past 12 months and summer season were positive determinants, and therefore potentially protective factors against vitamin D deficiency in older people.

The findings were based on 6004 midlife and older adults, living at Northern latitudes (England, 50-55°N) derived from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). Since UVB radiation (sunlight) is a known determinant of vitamin D status, this was investigated. Interestingly, residents in the South of England had a reduced risk of deficiency, compared with the North, even after adjustment for socioeconomic and other predictors of vitamin D status.

This new research demonstrates that vitamin D deficiency is prevalent in older adult populations living at Northern latitudes and highlights the importance of public health strategies throughout midlife and older age to achieve optimal vitamin D status.