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## **CMSC-ACTRIMS: Content of OTC Vitamin D Low, Unpredictable**

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**By Richard Robinson, Contributing Writer, MedPage Today**  
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### **MedPage Today Action Points**

- Explain to interested patients that in one small but carefully done study, the actual dose of OTC vitamin D was below the listed dose in all brands tested.
- Note that this study was published as an abstract and presented at a conference. These data and conclusions should be considered to be preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

### **Review**

SAN ANTONIO -- Multiple sclerosis (MS) patients taking over-the-counter vitamin D aren't getting what they're paying for, or what their neurologists recommend, according to a study presented here.

The mean vitamin D content from 10 OTC brands was only 33% of what the label claimed, with the actual content ranging from less than 1% to 82% of the advertised level. The study was presented at the meeting of the Joint Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers and America's Committee on Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis.

Vitamin D supplements are increasingly being recommended to MS patients, both for osteoporosis, which is common in the disease, and for presumed immunomodulatory actions as well, according to senior author Peter Calabresi, MD, of the Department of Neurology at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. "As the role of vitamin D in immune regulation in MS gains increasing focus, oral supplementation is growing," he said.

The level of recommended supplementation depends on the patient's individual deficiency, although 4000 IU daily is a common dose.

However, given the wide variety of vitamin D<sub>3</sub> (cholecalciferol) supplements available and "limited regulation within the nutritional supplement industry, the true vitamin D<sub>3</sub> content of over-the-counter supplements is a concern," Calabresi said.

To test levels in commonly purchased supplements, his group collected 10 bottles of OTC supplements from local and on-line retail pharmacies. Vitamin D<sub>3</sub> was extracted