King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1016/j.schres.2018.08.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2018.08.011)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Lally, J., Ajnakina, O., Singh, N., Gardner-Sood, P., Stubbs, B., Stringer, D., Di Forti, M., David, A. S., Smith, S., Murray, R. M., Howes, O. D., & Gaughran, F. (2019). Vitamin D and clinical symptoms in First Episode Psychosis (FEP): a prospective cohort study. *Schizophrenia Research*, 204, 381-388.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2018.08.011>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Title: Vitamin D and clinical symptoms in FEP: A prospective cohort study

Authors

John Lally^{1,4}, Olesya Ajnakina¹, Nidhita Singh¹, Poonam Gardner-Sood¹, Brendon Stubbs^{5,6}, Dominic Stringer⁷, Marta Di Forti⁸, Anthony S David^{1,9}, Shubulade Smith^{10,11}, Robin M Murray^{1,12}, Oliver D Howes^{1,13}, Fiona Gaughran^{1,14}

¹ Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, London, UK

² Department of Psychiatry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, Ireland

³ Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine and Medical Sciences, University College Dublin, St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland

⁴ Department of Psychiatry, St Vincent's Hospital Fairview, Dublin, Ireland

⁵ Psychological Medicine Department, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, SE5 8AF

⁶ Physiotherapy Department, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AZ, United Kingdom

⁷ Department of Biostatistics and Health Informatics, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, London, UK

⁸ Department of Social Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry (SGDP), Institute of Psychiatry Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, UK

⁹ National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Mental Health Biomedical Research Centre at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London, UK

¹⁰ Department of Forensic and Neurodevelopmental Science, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, London, UK

¹¹ Forensic Intensive Care Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK

¹² Department of Psychiatry, Experimental Biomedicine and Clinical Neuroscience(BIONEC),University of Palermo, Italy

¹³ MRC Clinical Sciences Centre (Imperial Hammersmith Campus)

¹⁴ National Psychosis Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK

Dr John Lally, MB MSc MRCPsych,

Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, London, United Kingdom; Department of Psychiatry, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, Ireland; Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine and Medical Sciences, University College Dublin, St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, Ireland; Department of Psychiatry, St Vincent's Hospital Fairview, Dublin, Ireland

Email: john.lally@kcl.ac.uk (corresponding author)

Dr Olesya Ajnakina, PhD

Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Email: Olesya.ajnakina@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Nidhita Singh, MBBS, MRCPsych

Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Email: Nidhita.singh@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Poonam Gardner-Sood, PhD

Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, London, United Kingdom

Email: Poonam.sood@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Brendon Stubbs, MSc, MCSP, PhD

Psychological Medicine Department, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London and Physiotherapy Department, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Denmark Hill, London, United Kingdom

Email: brendon.stubbs@kcl.ac.uk

Mr Dominic Stringer, Statistician, Department of Biostatistics and Health Informatics, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, London, UK

Email: dominic.stringer@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Marta Di Forti, PhD

Department of Social Genetic and Developmental Psychiatry (SGDP), Institute of Psychiatry Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, UK

Email: marta.diforti@kcl.ac.uk

Prof Anthony S. David, FRCP, FRCPsych, MD, MSc.

Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, and National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Mental Health Biomedical Research Centre at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London, UK

Email: anthony.david@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Shubulade Smith, MBBS MD FRCPsych. Clinical Senior Lecturer, Department of Forensic and Neurodevelopmental Science, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, London UK and Consultant Psychiatrist, Forensic Intensive Care Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK.

Email: Shubulade.Smith@slam.nhs.uk

Professor Sir Robin M Murray, MD DSc FRCP FRCPsych FMedSci FRS, Professor of Psychiatric Research, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's

College London and Department of Psychiatry, Experimental Biomedicine and Clinical Neuroscience(BIONEC),University of Palermo, Italy

Email: robin.murray@kcl.ac.uk

Professor Oliver D Howes, BM BCh MA MRCPsych PhD DM

Group Head and Hon Consultant, MRC London Institute of Medical Sciences (Imperial Hammersmith Campus) & Reader, Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London, London, UK

Email: oliver.howes@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Fiona Gaughran MB, BCh, BAO, FRCPI, FRCP, FRCPPsych, MD,

National Psychosis Service, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, and Reader, Institute of Psychiatry Psychology and Neuroscience, Kings College London, United Kingdom.

Email: Fiona.p.gaughran@kcl.ac.uk

Corresponding author:

Dr John Lally

PO63, Department of Psychosis Studies

Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN),

King's College London,

De Crespigny Park

London SE5 8AF

Email: john.lally@kcl.ac.uk

Tel: (0044) (0)203 2286000

Fax:(0044) (0)203 2284312

Word count:

Abstract: 220

Article: 3704

Tables/Figures: 4

Supplementary tables: 4

Running head: vitamin D and psychotic symptoms in FEP

Abstract

Background

There is a paucity of longitudinal research investigating vitamin D in people with early psychosis.

Method

Vitamin D levels were measured in 168 patients (64%(n=108) male, mean age 29.3(9.8)years)with first episode psychosis (FEP), along with measures of clinical state at baseline and at 12 months follow up.

We assessed the a) cross sectional, and; b) longitudinal relationships between continuous and categorical 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D) levels and clinical symptoms at first contact for psychosis and at 12 months.

Results

In FEP, 80% (n=134) at baseline, and 76% at 12 months follow up, had suboptimal vitamin D levels (<20 ng/ml). Suboptimal levels of 25 (OH) D at baseline were not cross-sectionally associated with clinical symptoms. Higher vitamin D levels at baseline (n=77) were significantly associated with better visual reproduction-immediate recall ($\beta=0.249$, 95%CI=-0.012-0.871,p=0.044).

Higher baseline vitamin D levels were prospectively associated with lower total PANSS ($\beta=-0.24, 95\%CI=-0.47—0.01, p=0.04$) and PANSS negative symptom scores ($\beta=-0.12, 95\%CI=-0.23—0.01, p=0.04$) at 12 months.

Conclusion

We identified a prospective association between higher baseline serum Vitamin D levels and lower total psychotic symptoms and negative symptoms of psychosis at 12 months after first contact for psychosis. The results of this study require replication in larger prospective studies, and highlight the need for large randomised trials to assess the effect of vitamin D supplementation on symptoms of psychosis in FEP.

Keywords: 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D); FEP; schizophrenia; longitudinal; negative symptoms; cognitive ; psychosis

1. Introduction

Vitamin D is a secosteroid hormone which functions as a neuroprotective factor, with a role to play in neuroimmunomodulation, regulation of neurotrophic factors and brain development (Eyles et al., 2013; Harms et al., 2008). Vitamin D is primarily acquired through cutaneous synthesis under the action of ultraviolet (UV) sunlight (Holick, 2004) and to a variable but much lesser extent from nutritional sources. Vitamin D levels thus reflect ambient levels of sunlight (Hypponen and Power, 2007). An increased risk of developing schizophrenia is seen in settings where sunlight may be relatively low - higher latitudes (Gupta and Murray, 1992; Jongsma et al., 2018; Saha et al., 2006) and urban settings (Mortensen et al., 1999; Peen et al., 2010), with a higher prevalence of psychosis seen in Black African or Black Caribbean migrant groups in the UK (Fearon et al., 2006). Vitamin D during neurodevelopment may be important - Winter/ Spring births confer a higher risk of psychosis (Davies et al., 2003), while a Danish longitudinal case-control study has found that vitamin D in neonates is associated with the risk of developing schizophrenia in adult life (McGrath et al., 2010).

Vitamin D levels are sub-optimal in people with established schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders (Adamson et al., 2017), being lower than matched controls even from the first episode of psychosis (Crews et al., 2013; Firth et al., 2017). In the two largest cross sectional studies of Vitamin D in established psychotic disorders, levels of suboptimal Vitamin D (vitamin D insufficiency and deficiency) of 90% (Lally et al., 2016) and 46% (Suetani et al., 2017) have been recorded. Suboptimal vitamin D in schizophrenia and psychotic disorders is increasingly recognised as a widespread problem (Valipour et al., 2014).

Relationships between vitamin D and psychotic symptoms, both positive and negative have been reported in established schizophrenia (Adamson et al., 2017; Berg et al., 2010; Cieslak et al., 2014; Dogan Bulut et al., 2016; Nerhus et al., 2016), though the largest cross sectional

study of 324 patients with established psychotic disorders did not replicate these findings (Lally et al., 2016). The most consistent findings in people with mental disorders have been associations between lower vitamin D levels and depression (Anglin et al., 2013). Inverse correlations between vitamin D levels and depressive symptoms have been identified in some cross sectional studies in established psychosis (Berg et al., 2010; Nerhus et al., 2016), but this is an equivocal finding (Itzhaky et al., 2012; Lally et al., 2016).

Considerably less is known about clinical correlates of low vitamin D in FEP compared to those with established psychosis. Low vitamin D levels were associated with negative symptoms and more severe cognitive deficits in 20 people with first episode schizophrenia (FES) (Graham et al., 2015). These findings were supported by a cross sectional study of 31 FEP patients, in which a similar inverse correlation between vitamin D levels and negative symptoms was identified (Yee et al., 2016). A somewhat larger study with 71 FEP patients did not identify significant correlations between vitamin D and psychotic symptoms, but did identify significant correlations with depressive symptoms (Nerhus et al., 2015). Associations with clinical state have been demonstrated in adolescents who are 3.5 times more likely to have psychotic symptoms when vitamin D deficient (Gracious et al., 2012).

Cognitive deficits are a recognised feature of psychotic disorders, evident prior to the onset of illness and with impairment in processing speeds, verbal and working memory and executive functioning the most consistent deficits found (Fatouros-Bergman et al., 2014; Howes et al., 2015; Nerhus et al., 2017; Zanelli et al., 2010). The neurobiology underlying the cognitive impairment seen in psychotic disorders is unclear (Howes et al., 2015). The role of Vitamin D in brain development and functioning supports the hypothesis that hypovitaminosis D could contribute to cognitive impairments. While the relationship between low vitamin D levels and worse cognitive function is best established in the elderly (van der Schaft et al., 2013), the association in those with psychosis remains uncertain. A cross sectional association between Vitamin D insufficiency and more severe cognitive deficits (as measured by overall cognitive score) in twenty cases of FES was identified (Graham et al.,

2015). Of the individual cognitive measures, only verbal fluency was related to low vitamin D status, although once adjusted for age, the relationship no longer remained significant. Cognitive function was not correlated with Vitamin D status in healthy controls. In a cross sectional study of 225 people with psychotic disorders, vitamin D deficiency was associated with decreased processing speed and decreased verbal fluency (Nerhus et al., 2017).

A major limitation of work to date exploring the relationship between vitamin D and clinical state in people FEP is that to the best of our knowledge no longitudinal study exists, precluding inferences on the directionality between vitamin D and clinical status. Further, while previous cross sectional studies of small sample size have assessed the relationship between vitamin D and psychotic and depressive symptoms, only one has explored the relationship with cognition.

1.2 Study aims:

Clinical remission and recovery in FEP remains suboptimal (Lally et al., 2017a) and in the current study, we sought to clarify whether serum vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH)D)) levels are prospectively associated with psychotic and depressive symptoms at 12 months after first contact for FEP.

Given the paucity of research investigating vitamin D in people with early psychosis, we set out to examine a) the cross sectional relationship between vitamin D and clinical state and cognitive measures at first contact for psychosis; b) the relationship between baseline vitamin D status and depressive and psychotic symptoms at 12 months; and c) the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency during the first year of treatment for psychosis.

We hypothesized that baseline 25(OH)D serum levels are cross sectionally associated with clinical state measures in FEP, and that lower vitamin D levels at baseline would be inversely associated with depressive and psychotic symptoms at 12 months.

2. Methods:

2.1 Study participants and design

A prospective observational study of 168 adults (108 males) with a first episode psychosis (FEP), recruited as part of a prospective observational cohort study, Physical health and substance Use Measures in first onset Psychosis (PUMP), part of the National Institute of Health Research funded IMPACT programme (grant RP-PG-0606-1049).

All participants were included in the study after written, informed consent and the study protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (08/H0807/53) Patients were assessed at baseline and after 1 year of follow-up.

2.2 Eligibility criteria

Inclusion Criteria were as follows: a) aged between 18 and 65; b) met the ICD-10 criteria for FEP (codes F20-29 and F30-33) (World Health Organization, 1992) and; c) understood English and did not require an interpreter.

Patients were excluded if they: were pregnant or had a major medical illness or neurological disease; met the criteria for organic psychosis (F09) or presented with evidence of transient psychotic symptoms resulting from acute intoxication as defined by ICD-10; or diagnosed with a moderate or severe learning disability (as defined by ICD-10, World Health Organization, 1992) (World Health Organization, 1992); or had a history of previous contact with health (GP or psychiatric) services for psychosis(Lally et al., 2017b).

2.3 Recruitment

Patients were recruited as soon after first presentation as possible and were followed up prospectively over a twelve-month period during which they remained under the care of mental health teams. The baseline diagnoses were made from face-to-face interviews and mental health records according to ICD-10 criteria (World Health Organization, 1992)

utilising the Operational Criteria Checklists (OPCRIT) (McGuffin et al., 1991). Individuals with comorbid substance use disorders were not excluded.

2.4 Outcome measures

2.4.1 Serum Vitamin D measurement and categorisation

Serum Vitamin D levels (serum 25(OH)D) were measured at baseline and at one year, using chemiluminescence immunoassay (DiaSorin, S.P.A. Saluggia (Vercelli), Italy). Vitamin D insufficiency was defined as vitamin D levels between 10-20 ng/ml while levels below 10ng/ml were classed as vitamin D deficiency(Dawson-Hughes et al., 2010). A serum level of greater than 20 ng/ml (equivalent to >50 nmol/L) was considered optimal (Pearce and Cheetham, 2010). We further categorised vitamin D as quartiles, replicating previous work(Jovanova et al., 2017), to ensure that we were able to assess the effects vitamin D across its range of values.

2.4.2 Demographic data and clinical outcome measures

Baseline data included demographics, age, sex, ethnicity (self-report), and diagnoses. Clinical state measures were recorded at baseline and at 12 months follow up. The severity of psychopathology was rated on the Positive and Negative Symptom Scale (PANSS) (Kay et al., 1989) and by the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) scale at first presentation for psychosis. Mood symptoms were assessed using the Calgary Depression score (Addington et al., 1990), and the Young Mania Rating Scale (YMRS) (Young et al., 1978).

The assessment of psychopathology and cognition was completed blind to vitamin D status.

2.4.3 Neurocognitive assessment

A subset of 88 patients at baseline were administered a neurocognitive battery to assess cognitive functioning. The battery comprised assessments from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Third Edition (WAIS-III) and the Wechsler Memory Scale – Third Edition

(WMS-III). The following tests were used from the WAIS-III battery: block design; matrix reasoning; digit symbol coding; information; and digit span. The following tests were used from the WMS-III battery: verbal fluency; trail making; logical memory; visual reproduction; and spatial span. Two subtasks from the computerised Cambridge Neuropsychological Test Automated Battery (CANTAB) were administered to 54 patients within the subset: the Stockings of Cambridge (SoC) (Sahakian and Owen, 1992) and the Spatial Working Memory (SWM) (Sahakian and Owen, 1992) task. The SoC is a spatial planning task measuring executive function. The SWM is a test of working memory and in particular measures an individual's ability to retain and manipulate stored information. The National Adult Reading Test (NART) (Nelson and Willison, 1991) was used as an estimate of general IQ.

2.5 Confounding factors

The following proposed confounding factors were evaluated: gender, age, and season of sampling. We used the season of blood sampling as a proxy for sunlight irradiation, as it is a factor which will affect the duration and intensity of sunlight exposure. We defined the seasons as follows: Summer: June to August; Autumn: September-November; Winter: December to February; Spring: March-May.

2.6 Data Analysis

2.6.1. Multiple imputation.

Serum 25(OH)D level (ng/ml), ethnicity and gender were the only variables in the dataset that did not have any missing information. It has now been recognised that complete case analysis without adequate handling of missing data may lead to biased results, or reduced power and precision of estimates (Zhao and Long, 2016). We assumed that the missing variables were missing at random (MAR). The assumption is that the propensity for missingness in our dataset was not linked to the unobserved values, and only dependent on observed data. We imputed the missing values using multiple imputation by chained

equations (MICE) (Deng et al., 2016). MICE has been shown to be a robust method for dealing with missing data across empirical and longitudinal studies (He et al., 2011; Zhao and Long, 2016). In the MICE procedure a series of regression models are run whereby each variable with missing data is modelled according to its distribution (Azur et al., 2011); for continuous variables, this would be a multivariable linear regression; and for binary variables, a logistic regression. To increase the precision of the imputed data and subsequent perditions, we imputed all variables of interest including outcomes and confounding variables (Schafer and Graham, 2002) and additionally included auxiliary variables (Collins et al., 2001) such as baseline diagnoses and ethnicity. We used 25 sets of imputations (White et al., 2011); each imputed dataset was then analysed separately using standard complete-data analysis methods and the results were combined across all imputed datasets using Rubin's rule (Rubin, 1996). In the present study, we conducted multiple imputation using the MICE package (Van Buuren, 2011) in R. The proportion of outcome measures imputed compared to observed is shown in supplementary table 1.

2.6.2. Descriptive and association analyses.

Between groups comparisons were made using χ^2 test for categorical variables; independent student's *t*-test for continuous variables, or the Mann-Whitney *U* test if variables were not normally distributed. Linear regression was used to test the hypothesis that baseline vitamin D levels were related to clinical state at 12 months, by examining the association between baseline serum vitamin D levels and the 12-month PANSS, GAF, CDRS, and YMRS scores controlling for potential confounding factors of gender, age, season of sampling at baseline, and the corresponding baseline clinical variable. Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$. All analyses were conducted in RStudio version 0.99.486 (Integrated Development for R. RStudio, Inc., Boston, MA).

Of the subset of 88 patients administered the neurocognitive battery at baseline, 76 had baseline 25(OH)D serum levels recorded. An exploratory analysis was conducted examining

the linear correlation between each individual baseline neurocognitive test and baseline 25(OH)D serum levels using Pearson's correlation coefficient. For those neurocognitive tests which were significantly correlated ($p < 0.05$) with 25(OH)D serum levels, separate linear regressions were run adjusting for age, gender and season of sampling as potential confounding factors.

3. Results

Demographic and clinical characteristics of participants and the relationships with Vitamin D status are shown in table 1 and table 2. Nearly half the participants were of white ethnicity ($n=78$; 46%), with a large minority of participants of black ethnicity ($n=61$; 36%). Forty two percent ($n=71$) were vitamin D deficient (<10 ng/mL) at study recruitment, 37.5% ($n=63$) were vitamin D insufficient (10-20 ng/mL), and 20.2% ($n=34$) had sufficient vitamin levels (>20 mcg/L). The mean 25-OHD serum level was 13.8 (SD 9.3) ng/ml (range 4.0–67.9 ng/ml).

Those with suboptimal vitamin D levels at study recruitment were more likely to be of Black ethnicity ($n=57$; 93% with suboptimal vitamin D levels) ($\chi^2=15.73$, $p < 0.001$) and to have had blood sampling in winter ($n=32$; 97% with suboptimal vitamin D levels) ($\chi^2=12.65$, $p=0.005$).

Those who were inpatients at baseline had a significantly higher mean vitamin D level (15.8 (11.6) ng/ml) than outpatients (mean level= 12.2 (6.9) ng/ml) ($t=2.039$, $p=0.044$).

3.1 Neurocognition subgroup

The associations between 25-OHD levels and demographic and clinical features in the subgroup in which neurocognitive measures were performed at baseline ($n=76$) are shown in supplementary table 2. The mean 25-OHD serum level was 12.95 (SD 8.1) ng/ml (range 4.0–41.3 ng/ml).

3.2 Vitamin D status at 12 months

Eighty four percent had suboptimal vitamin D levels at 12 months follow up; 45.8% (n=77) with vitamin D deficiency (<10 mcg/L); 36.9% (n=62) with vitamin D insufficiency (25-OHD level of 10-20 mcg/L) and 17.3% (n=29) with optimal vitamin D levels). The mean serum vitamin D level at 12 months was 12.2 (SD=8.5) ng/ml (range=4.0-71.9 mcg/L).

3.3 Cross sectional analysis at baseline

The cross-sectional analysis of the relationship between baseline 25(OH)D serum levels and baseline clinical state, including depressive and psychotic symptoms is presented in Table 1. We did not identify any association between 25(OH) D serum levels, analysed either as a binary variable (optimal and suboptimal vitamin D) or as quartiles, and clinical state measures.

Cross-sectional analysis of the relationship between baseline 25(OH)D serum levels and neurocognitive assessments yielded statistically significant unadjusted associations with seven cognitive tests encompassing verbal memory, non-verbal memory and executive functioning (supplementary table 3). When adjusted for age, gender and season of sampling, only an association between higher vitamin D levels and visual reproduction - immediate recall (predominantly testing non-verbal memory) remained statistically significant ($\beta=0.249$, 95% CI=-0.012-0.871, $p=0.044$).

3.4 Longitudinal analysis

Next, we assessed the longitudinal relationship between baseline 25(OH)D serum levels (as a continuous measure and quartiles) and 12-month depressive and psychotic symptoms, as well as general functioning at 12 months after study recruitment (see tables 3-4).

Higher levels of 25 (OH) D at baseline were associated with reduced total PANSS score ($B=-0.24$, 95%CI=-0.47- -0.01, $p=0.04$) and reduced PANSS negative symptom scores ($B=-0.12$, 95%CI=-0.23— -0.01, $p=0.04$) at 12 months (table 3).

When analyzing 25 (OH) D serum level in quartiles, we found no significant prospective relationship with 12-month clinical state measures, including psychotic and depressive symptoms (table 4).

Longitudinal changes in serum 25(OH) D levels were not associated with clinical state outcome scores at 12 months (see supplementary table 4). There was no significant association between the change in serum 25 (OH) levels and changes in psychotic symptoms as measured by the PANSS or depressive symptoms as measured by the Calgary Depression Scale score over the first 12 months of illness, when adjusting for gender, age, and season of baseline 25(OH) D sampling.

4. Discussion

4.1 Vitamin D and clinical symptoms

This is the first longitudinal study to assess the relationship between serum vitamin D at first presentation with psychosis and clinical state measures 12 months later. In our longitudinal analysis, we identified a significant inverse relationship between baseline serum vitamin D levels and both total psychotic symptoms, and negative symptoms of psychosis at 12 months follow up. This is the first report of an association between higher baseline vitamin D levels and improved clinical outcomes at one year. Further we conducted the largest cross sectional analysis of vitamin levels and clinical symptoms in FEP, in which we failed to identify a cross sectional relationship between depressive or psychotic symptoms and mean serum vitamin D levels or vitamin D deficiency, unlike earlier studies.

The lack of an association between vitamin D levels (both categorical and continuous) and negative symptoms of psychosis at baseline, but the identified association with negative symptoms at 12 months, raise the possibility that low vitamin D at onset of psychosis may be associated with the later emergence of negative symptoms. Like previous work in FEP, we failed to identify a cross sectional relationship between vitamin D levels and positive

(Graham et al., 2015; Nerhus et al., 2015; Yee et al., 2016) or negative symptoms (Nerhus et al., 2015).

4.2 Vitamin D and negative symptoms

We identified that higher baseline vitamin D levels were associated with improved negative symptoms at 12 months follow up. Vitamin D is thought to be neuroprotective, with brain antioxidant properties, and anti-inflammatory effects, potentially improving negative symptoms secondary to unmitigated oxidative stress (Mitra et al., 2017; Nerhus et al., 2016; Wrzosek et al., 2013). There remains a significant unmet need in the management of negative symptoms, with no treatment having consistent replicated efficacy in treating negative symptoms. Though preliminary, our findings raise the prospect of benefits of optimising vitamin D levels in early psychosis and ameliorating negative symptoms of psychosis.

4.3 Vitamin D and cognitive function

Our exploratory study on the cross-sectional relationship of cognitive functioning and baseline vitamin D levels is likewise an important addition to earlier work. At unadjusted levels, the statistically significant neurocognitive test correlates were consistent with existing associations of decreased processing speeds, memory deficits and poor executive functioning in those with psychotic illness. However, we did not replicate the previously identified association between vitamin D and reduced verbal fluency in those with FEP (Graham et al., 2015; Nerhus et al., 2017). When adjusted, we demonstrated a statistically significant association between higher levels of vitamin D and improved nonverbal memory. A randomised trial (n=82) (2017) investigating the effects of high dose vitamin D supplementation on cognition in healthy adults demonstrated significantly improved performance in nonverbal (visual) memory tasks with high dose vitamin D supplementation, more so than in other cognitive domains (Pettersen, 2017). An RCT investigating the use of high dose oral vitamin D in people with schizophrenia treated with clozapine found that those

treated with 14,000 IU of vitamin D (n=24) had significantly improved delayed recall (memory) and attention scores , though this effect was lost after correcting for multiple comparisons compared to placebo treated cases (n=23) (Krivoy et al., 2017). The identified association between 25(OH)D serum levels and nonverbal memory in our study replicates findings from previous general population observational studies (Darwish et al., 2015; Kuzma et al., 2016). It is postulated that the association reflects nonverbal memory's greater cognitive demand and dependence upon executive functioning (Pettersen, 2017).

4.4 Prevalence of vitamin D insufficiency/deficiency

We identified that 80% (n=134) had suboptimal vitamin D levels (<20ng/L) at first contact for psychosis, a much higher proportion than the previously reported 50% (n=10) with vitamin D levels <30ng/ml at FEP (Graham et al., 2015). We identified a mean vitamin D level of 13.8ng/ml (n=168) at study recruitment, much lower than the previously identified mean vitamin D levels in FEP of 28.2 ng/ml (n=20) (Graham et al., 2015), 61.7 ng/ml (n=31) (Yee et al., 2016) and 44.8 ng/ml (n=71) (Nerhus et al., 2015). This finding may be a reflection of the ethnicity distribution of our sample.

4.5 Strengths and limitations

A major strength of this study is the prospective study design, allowing for inference to be made on the association between vitamin D and total and negative symptoms of psychosis. The association between higher vitamin D levels at onset with fewer total and negative psychotic symptoms one year later is suggestive of a possible casual association, and the longitudinal association reduces the likelihood of reverse causality as an explanation for the finding. However, as this is an exploratory study, we did not employ a strategy to account for multiple comparisons (Althouse, 2016; Rothman, 1990). Being a hypothesis driven exploratory study, we sought to limit the possibility of type II errors (incorrect confirmation of the null hypothesis), which multiple testing will increase while reducing the risk of type I errors. Further, as clinical symptoms are mutually correlated, the use of Bonferroni

correction would not be appropriate as it assumes independence of the performed assessments (Bender and Lange, 2001). However, as an exploratory study, our findings require replication in large prospective cohorts. There are also several confounding factors that we did not control for, including antipsychotic adherence and measures of diet and physical activity. In established psychosis lower vitamin D levels are associated with less intense physical activity and reduced time spent outdoors (Lally et al., 2016). How this translates to FEP populations is not yet clear, and to the best of our knowledge has not been investigated (Adamson et al., 2017). Further, we did not identify a significant difference in negative symptom scores between those with higher and lower vitamin D levels. The study lacked power to confidently detect potential real effects of findings of smaller statistically significant difference. Nevertheless, we report on the largest sample size of FEP patients with vitamin D data to date, with 168 people included compared to sample sizes ranging from 20-71 in earlier cross sectional studies (Graham et al., 2015; Nerhus et al., 2015; Yee et al., 2016).

Conclusion

Suboptimal vitamin D is highly prevalent in FEP, and remains so 12 months after first contact for psychosis. We found that higher baseline vitamin D levels were associated with fewer total and negative psychotic symptoms at one year after first contact for psychosis, suggesting that vitamin D may have relevance to the course of psychotic disorders. Randomised controlled trials to investigate the potential of vitamin D supplementation in ameliorating general outcomes, negative symptoms and cognitive impairment in early psychosis are called for.

Acknowledgments

This paper summarises independent research funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) under its IMPACT Programme (Grant Reference Number RP-PG- 0606-

1049) and had support from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centre at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London. BS and FG are, in part, funded by the National Institute for Health Research Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research & Care Funding scheme. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NHS, the National Institute for Health Research or the Department of Health.

Declaration of interest

MDF has received honoraria for lectures from Janssen and Sunovion

ASD has received honoraria from Janssen and Roche Pharmaceuticals.

RMM has received honoraria for lectures from Lundbeck, Otsuka, Janssen and Sunovion.

OH has received investigator-initiated research funding from and/or participated in advisory/speaker meetings organised by Astra-Zeneca, Autifony, BMS, Eli Lilly, Heptares, Janssen, Lundbeck, Lyden-Delta, Otsuka, Servier, Sunovion, Rand and Roche

FG has received honoraria for advisory work and lectures or CME activity support from Roche, BMS, Lundbeck, Otsuka, Janssen and Sunovion, is a collaborator on a NHS Innovations project co-funded by Janssen and has a family member with professional links to Lilly and GSK, including shares.

All other authors (JL, OA, NS, PGS, BS, DS, SS) declare they have no conflict of interest.

Adamson, J., Lally, J., Gaughran, F., Krivoy, A., Allen, L., Stubbs, B., 2017. Correlates of vitamin D in psychotic disorders: A comprehensive systematic review. *Psychiatry Res* 249, 78-85.

Addington, D., Addington, J., Schissel, B., 1990. A depression rating scale for schizophrenics. *Schizophr Res* 3(4), 247-251.

Althouse, A.D., 2016. Adjust for Multiple Comparisons? It's Not That Simple. *Ann Thorac Surg* 101(5), 1644-1645.

Anglin, R.E., Samaan, Z., Walter, S.D., McDonald, S.D., 2013. Vitamin D deficiency and depression in adults: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Br J Psychiatry* 202, 100-107.

Azur, M.J., Stuart, E.A., Frangakis, C., Leaf, P.J., 2011. Multiple imputation by chained equations: what is it and how does it work? *Int J Methods Psychiatr Res* 20(1), 40-49.

- Bender, R., Lange, S., 2001. Adjusting for multiple testing--when and how? *J Clin Epidemiol* 54(4), 343-349.
- Berg, A.O., Melle, I., Torjesen, P.A., Lien, L., Hauff, E., Andreassen, O.A., 2010. A cross-sectional study of vitamin D deficiency among immigrants and Norwegians with psychosis compared to the general population. *J. Clin. Psychiatry* 71(12), 1598-1604.
- Cieslak, K., Feingold, J., Antonius, D., Walsh-Messinger, J., Dracxler, R., Rosedale, M., Aujero, N., Keefe, D., Goetz, D., Goetz, R., Malaspina, D., 2014. Low Vitamin D levels predict clinical features of schizophrenia. *Schizophr Res* 159(2-3), 543-545.
- Collins, L.M., Schafer, J.L., Kam, C.M., 2001. A comparison of inclusive and restrictive strategies in modern missing data procedures. *Psychol Methods* 6(4), 330-351.
- Crews, M., Lally, J., Gardner-Sood, P., Howes, O., Bonaccorso, S., Smith, S., Murray, R.M., Di Forti, M., Gaughran, F., 2013. Vitamin D deficiency in first episode psychosis: a case-control study. *Schizophr Res* 150(2-3), 533-537.
- Darwish, H., Zeinoun, P., Ghusn, H., Khoury, B., Tamim, H., Khoury, S.J., 2015. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D predicts cognitive performance in adults. *Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat* 11, 2217-2223.
- Davies, G., Welham, J., Chant, D., Torrey, E.F., McGrath, J., 2003. A systematic review and meta-analysis of Northern Hemisphere season of birth studies in schizophrenia. *Schizophr Bull* 29(3), 587-593.
- Dawson-Hughes, B., Mithal, A., Bonjour, J.-P., Boonen, S., Burckhardt, P., Fuleihan, G.E.-H., Josse, R.G., Lips, P., Morales-Torres, J., Yoshimura, N., 2010. IOF position statement: vitamin D recommendations for older adults. *Osteoporos Int* 21(7), 1151-1154.
- Deng, Y., Chang, C., Ido, M.S., Long, Q., 2016. Multiple Imputation for General Missing Data Patterns in the Presence of High-dimensional Data. *Sci Rep* 6(21689).
- Dogan Bulut, S., Bulut, S., Gorkem Atalan, D., Berkol, T., Gurcay, E., Turker, T., Aydemir, C., 2016. The Relationship between Symptom Severity and Low Vitamin D Levels in Patients with Schizophrenia. *PLoS One* 11(10), e0165284.
- Eyles, D.W., Burne, T.H., McGrath, J.J., 2013. Vitamin D, effects on brain development, adult brain function and the links between low levels of vitamin D and neuropsychiatric disease. *Front. Neuroendocrinol.* 34(1), 47-64.
- Fatouros-Bergman, H., Cervenka, S., Flyckt, L., Edman, G., Farde, L., 2014. Meta-analysis of cognitive performance in drug-naive patients with schizophrenia. *Schizophr Res* 158(1-3), 156-162.
- Fearon, P., Kirkbride, J.B., Morgan, C., Dazzan, P., Morgan, K., Lloyd, T., Hutchinson, G., Tarrant, J., Fung, W.L., Holloway, J., Mallett, R., Harrison, G., Leff, J., Jones, P.B., Murray, R.M., 2006. Incidence of schizophrenia and other psychoses in ethnic minority groups: results from the MRC AESOP Study. *Psychol Med* 36(11), 1541-1550.
- Firth, J., Carney, R., Stubbs, B., Teasdale, S.B., Vancampfort, D., Ward, P.B., Berk, M., Sarris, J., 2017. Nutritional Deficiencies and Clinical Correlates in First-Episode Psychosis: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Schizophr Bull*.
- Gracious, B.L., Finucane, T.L., Friedman-Campbell, M., Messing, S., Parkhurst, M.N., 2012. Vitamin D deficiency and psychotic features in mentally ill adolescents: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychiatry* 12(38), 12-38.
- Graham, K.A., Keefe, R.S., Lieberman, J.A., Calikoglu, A.S., Lansing, K.M., Perkins, D.O., 2015. Relationship of low vitamin D status with positive, negative and cognitive symptom domains in people with first-episode schizophrenia. *Early Interv Psychiatry* 9(5), 397-405.
- Gupta, S., Murray, R.M., 1992. The relationship of environmental temperature to the incidence and outcome of schizophrenia. *Br J Psychiatry* 160, 788-792.
- Harms, L., Eyles, D., McGrath, J., Mackay-Smith, A., Burne, T., 2008. Developmental vitamin D deficiency alters adult behavior in 129/SvJ and C57BL/6J mice. *Behav Brain Res* 187, 343 - 350.
- He, Y., Yucel, R., Raghunathan, T.E., 2011. A functional multiple imputation approach to incomplete longitudinal data. *Stat Med* 30(10), 1137-1156.

- Holick, M.F., 2004. Sunlight and vitamin D for bone health and prevention of autoimmune diseases, cancers, and cardiovascular disease. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 80(6 Suppl), 1678S-1688S.
- Howes, O., McCutcheon, R., Stone, J., 2015. Glutamate and dopamine in schizophrenia: an update for the 21st century. *J Psychopharmacol* 29(2), 97-115.
- Hypponen, E., Power, C., 2007. Hypovitaminosis D in British adults at age 45 y: nationwide cohort study of dietary and lifestyle predictors. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 85(3), 860-868.
- Itzhaky, D., Amital, D., Gorden, K., Bogomolni, A., Arnson, Y., Amital, H., 2012. Low serum vitamin D concentrations in patients with schizophrenia. *Isr Med Assoc J* 14(2), 88-92.
- Jongsma, H.E., Gayer-Anderson, C., Lasalvia, A., Quattrone, D., Mule, A., Szoke, A., Selten, J.P., Turner, C., Arango, C., Tarricone, I., Berardi, D., Tortelli, A., Llorca, P.M., de Haan, L., Bobes, J., Bernardo, M., Sanjuan, J., Santos, J.L., Arrojo, M., Del-Ben, C.M., Menezes, P.R., Velthorst, E., Murray, R.M., Rutten, B.P., Jones, P.B., van Os, J., Morgan, C., Kirkbride, J.B., 2018. Treated Incidence of Psychotic Disorders in the Multinational EU-GEI Study. *JAMA Psychiatry* 75(1), 36-46.
- Jovanova, O., Aarts, N., Noordam, R., Carola-Zillikens, M., Hofman, A., Tiemeier, H., 2017. Vitamin D serum levels are cross-sectionally but not prospectively associated with late-life depression. *Acta Psychiatr Scand* 135(3), 185-194.
- Kay, S.R., Opler, L.A., Lindenmayer, J.P., 1989. The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS): rationale and standardisation. *Br J Psychiatry Supp* 7, 59-67.
- Krivoy, A., Onn, R., Vilner, Y., Hochman, E., Weizman, S., Paz, A., Hess, S., Sagy, R., Kimhi-Nesher, S., Kalter, E., Friedman, T., Friedman, Z., Bormant, G., Trommer, S., Valevski, A., Weizman, A., 2017. Vitamin D Supplementation in Chronic Schizophrenia Patients Treated with Clozapine: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-controlled Clinical Trial. *EBioMedicine* 26, 138-145.
- Kuzma, E., Soni, M., Littlejohns, T.J., Ranson, J.M., van Schoor, N.M., Deeg, D.J., Comijs, H., Chaves, P.H., Kestenbaum, B.R., Kuller, L.H., Lopez, O.L., Becker, J.T., Langa, K.M., Henley, W.E., Lang, I.A., Ukoumunne, O.C., Llewellyn, D.J., 2016. Vitamin D and Memory Decline: Two Population-Based Prospective Studies. *J Alzheimers Dis* 50(4), 1099-1108.
- Lally, J., Ajnakina, O., Stubbs, B., Cullinane, M., Murphy, K.C., Gaughran, F., Murray, R.M., 2017a. Remission and recovery from first-episode psychosis in adults: systematic review and meta-analysis of long-term outcome studies. *Br J Psychiatry* 211(6), 350-358.
- Lally, J., Ajnakina, O., Stubbs, B., Williams, H.R., Colizzi, M., Carra, E., Fraietta, S., Gardner-Sood, P., Greenwood, K.E., Atakan, Z., Mondelli, V., Ismail, K., Howes, O., Taylor, D.M., Smith, S., Hopkins, D., Murray, R.M., Gaughran, F., 2017b. Hyperprolactinaemia in first episode psychosis - A longitudinal assessment. *Schizophr Res* 189, 117-125.
- Lally, J., Gardner-Sood, P., Firdosi, M., Iyegbe, C., Stubbs, B., Greenwood, K., Murray, R., Smith, S., Howes, O., Gaughran, F., 2016. Clinical correlates of vitamin D deficiency in established psychosis. *BMC Psychiatry* 16(1), 1-9.
- McGrath, J.J., Eyles, D.W., Pedersen, C.B., Anderson, C., Ko, P., Burne, T.H., Norgaard-Pedersen, B., Hougaard, D.M., Mortensen, P.B., 2010. Neonatal vitamin D status and risk of schizophrenia: a population-based case-control study. *Arch. Gen. Psychiatry* 67(9), 889-894.
- McGuffin, P., Farmer, A., Harvey, I., 1991. A polydiagnostic application of operational criteria in studies of psychotic illness. Development and reliability of the OPCRIT system. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 48(8), 764-770.
- Mitra, S., Natarajan, R., Ziedonis, D., Fan, X., 2017. Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory nutrient status, supplementation, and mechanisms in patients with schizophrenia. *Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry* 78, 1-11.
- Mortensen, P.B., Pedersen, C.B., Westergaard, T., Wohlfahrt, J., Ewald, H., Mors, O., Andersen, P.K., Melbye, M., 1999. Effects of family history and place and season of birth on the risk of schizophrenia. *N Engl J Med* 340(8), 603-608.
- Nelson, H.E., Willison, J., 1991. The National Adult Reading Test (NART). NFER-Nelson., Windsor.

- Nerhus, M., Berg, A.O., Dahl, S.R., Holvik, K., Gardsjord, E.S., Weibell, M.A., Bjella, T.D., Andreassen, O.A., Melle, I., 2015. Vitamin D status in psychotic disorder patients and healthy controls – The influence of ethnic background. *Psychiatry Res* 230(2), 616-621.
- Nerhus, M., Berg, A.O., Kvitland, L.R., Dieset, I., Hope, S., Dahl, S.R., Weibell, M.A., Romm, K.L., Faerden, A., Andreassen, O.A., Melle, I., 2016. Low vitamin D is associated with negative and depressive symptoms in psychotic disorders. *Schizophr Res* 178(1-3), 44-49.
- Nerhus, M., Berg, A.O., Simonsen, C., Haram, M., Haatveit, B., Dahl, S.R., Gurholt, T.P., Bjella, T.D., Ueland, T., Andreassen, O.A., Melle, I., 2017. Vitamin D Deficiency Associated With Cognitive Functioning in Psychotic Disorders. *J Clin Psychiatry* 78(7), e750-e757.
- Pearce, S.H., Cheetham, T.D., 2010. Diagnosis and management of vitamin D deficiency. *BMJ* 340(11).
- Peen, J., Schoevers, R.A., Beekman, A.T., Dekker, J., 2010. The current status of urban-rural differences in psychiatric disorders. *Acta Psychiatr Scand* 121(2), 84-93.
- Pettersen, J.A., 2017. Does high dose vitamin D supplementation enhance cognition?: A randomized trial in healthy adults. *Exp Gerontol* 90, 90-97.
- Rothman, K.J., 1990. No adjustments are needed for multiple comparisons. *Epidemiology* 1(1), 43-46.
- Rubin, D.B., 1996. Multiple Imputation After 18+ Years. *J Am Stat Assoc* 91(434), 473-489.
- Saha, S., Chant, D.C., Welham, J.L., McGrath, J.J., 2006. The incidence and prevalence of schizophrenia varies with latitude. *Acta Psychiatr Scand* 114(1), 36-39.
- Sahakian, B.J., Owen, A.M., 1992. Computerized assessment in neuropsychiatry using CANTAB: discussion paper. *J R Soc Med* 85(7), 399-402.
- Schafer, J.L., Graham, J.W., 2002. Missing data: our view of the state of the art. *Psychol Methods* 7(2), 147-177.
- Suetani, S., Saha, S., Eyles, D.W., Scott, J.G., McGrath, J.J., 2017. Prevalence and correlates of suboptimal vitamin D status in people living with psychotic disorders: Data from the Australian Survey of High Impact Psychosis. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry* 9, 921-929.
- Valipour, G., Saneei, P., Esmailzadeh, A., 2014. Serum vitamin D levels in relation to schizophrenia: a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 99(10), 3863-3872.
- Van Buuren, S., Groothuis-Oudshoorn, K., 2011. mice: Multivariate Imputation by Chained Equations in R. *J Stat Softw* 45(3), 1-67.
- van der Schaft, J., Koek, H.L., Dijkstra, E., Verhaar, H.J., van der Schouw, Y.T., Emmelot-Vonk, M.H., 2013. The association between vitamin D and cognition: a systematic review. *Ageing Res Rev* 12(4), 1013-1023.
- White, I.R., Royston, P., Wood, A.M., 2011. Multiple imputation using chained equations: Issues and guidance for practice. *Stat Med* 30(4), 377-399.
- World Health Organization, 1992. The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders: Clinical Descriptions and Diagnostic Guidelines. World Health Organization.
- Wrzosek, M., Łukaszewicz, J., Wrzosek, M., Jakubczyk, A., Matsumoto, H., Piątkiewicz, P., Radziwoń-Zaleska, M., Wojnar, M., Nowicka, G., 2013. Vitamin D and the central nervous system. *Pharmacol Rep* 65(2), 271-278.
- Yee, J.Y., See, Y.M., Abdul Rashid, N.A., Neelamekam, S., Lee, J., 2016. Association between serum levels of bioavailable vitamin D and negative symptoms in first-episode psychosis. *Psychiatry Res* 243, 390-394.
- Young, R.C., Biggs, J.T., Ziegler, V.E., Meyer, D.A., 1978. A rating scale for mania: reliability, validity and sensitivity. *Br J Psychiatry* 133(5), 429-435.
- Zanelli, J., Reichenberg, A., Morgan, K., Fearon, P., Kravariti, E., Dazzan, P., Morgan, C., Zanelli, C., Demjaha, A., Jones, P.B., Doody, G.A., Kapur, S., Murray, R.M., 2010. Specific and generalized neuropsychological deficits: a comparison of patients with various first-episode psychosis presentations. *Am J Psychiatry* 167(1), 78-85.

Zhao, Y., Long, Q., 2016. Multiple imputation in the presence of high-dimensional data. *Stat Methods Med Res* 25(5), 2021-2035.