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Micronutrients and their supplementation in chronic cardiac failure. An update beyond theoretical perspectives.

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Abstract

Physicians' use of micronutrients to improve symptoms or outcomes in chronic illness has until recently been guided by limited data on the actions of individual agents in vitro or in animal studies. However several recently published clinical trials have provided information about which groups of patients are likely to benefit from which combination of micronutrients. Patients with chronic cardiac failure (CCF), particularly elderly individuals, have several reasons to be deficient in micronutrients including reduced intake, impaired gastrointestinal absorption and increased losses on the background of increased utilisation due for example to increased oxidative stress. Studies of nutritional supplementation in CCF patients have usually concentrated on specific agents. However given that many micronutrients have synergistic influences upon metabolic processes this strategy might merely lead to a shifting of a limiting step. Rather, a strategy of increasing the availability of multiple agents at once might be more logical. The aim of this article is to briefly review the experimental rationale for each of the micronutrients of potential benefit in chronic heart failure and examine the current clinical trial evidence supporting their use.

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