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Is violence in part a lithium deficiency state?

Mark R. Goldstein¹, Luca Mascitelli²
Tel.: +1 239 566 2382.

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Abstract

Violence, particularly firearm violence, leading to suicide and homicide is a significant problem worldwide. A majority of suicidal and homicidal violence involves males; homicidal violence is prevalent among young men and suicide is the leading cause of violence worldwide. Lithium, in *pharmacological* doses, has been used successfully for decades in treating bipolar disorders, and has been shown to decrease violent crime in this situation. Interestingly, lithium, in *trace* amounts, as occurs in some drinking water, has been inversely related to aggression, and suicidal and homicidal violence. Lithium is naturally found in vegetables, grains and drinking water, and dietary intake varies from nearly zero to 3 mg daily. Elemental lithium, in *trace* doses, has been shown to improve mood in weeks. Moreover, lithium, in *trace* amounts, has no toxicity. In order to ensure adequate dietary intakes of elemental lithium daily for the purpose of decreasing aggression and violence, we propose considering the fortification of cereal grain products with lithium and also the addition of lithium to vitamin preparations for adults. Importantly, randomized trials in various populations are needed to test this hypothesis.

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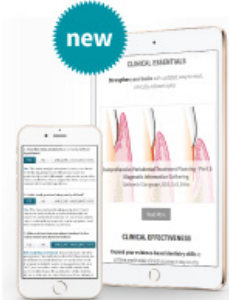
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