

## **Does Omega 3 protect against ADHD?**

A new study will provide further understanding about the effects of omega-3 fatty acids on the brain function of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The trial, being conducted by the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, will study the effects of these fatty acids on the learning skills, attention span, memory, reaction time and behaviour of 150 children with ADHD over 12 weeks. The effects will also be explored in 100 children without ADHD.

Omega-3 fatty acids are found in seafood, particularly fish. There is increasing evidence that a lack of these acids may be associated with developmental problems like ADHD – a common mental health problem which affects around 12 per cent of Australian children.

The evidence for positive effects of omega-3 fatty acids in children is mixed and the Murdoch Childrens' study will be one of the first to examine the issue in detail.

Researcher Dr Alex Collie says "ADHD is such a common disorder in Australia. This study will be an important step in validating claims that omega-3 fatty acids have a direct affect on cognition as well as behaviour."

Currently, the most commonly prescribed treatment for ADHD is stimulant medication. However in recent years parents have sought alternative treatments and researchers have noticed an increase in the use of omega-3 fatty acids.

Children taking part in the study will complete learning and behaviour tests in the first, fourth and 12<sup>th</sup> week of the study. During this time they will be given dietary supplements of either omega-3 fatty acids or placebo (supplements with no active ingredient). The children's parents and teachers will also participate, monitoring and rating the childrens' behaviour.

For more information on the study, please contact Jacqueline Williams on 03 9345 6590.

**Media enquires** Kellie Furey 0415 563 811