

Spectacular Study on Heart Failure and the Supplement CoQ10

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Can a safe dietary supplement dramatically prolong life for people with heart failure? Yes, if we can believe the results from a new study.

The study enrolled people with severe heart failure. This is a condition where the heart can barely pump blood around the body any more. This, for example, after previous heart attacks have damaged the heart (a broken heart, literally). People with severe heart failure run a large risk of dying within a few years.

The study tested the dietary supplement [coenzyme Q10](#) in heart failure. CoQ10 is an endogenous cholesterol-like substance involved in energy production in the cells. Particularly the heart contains a lot of Q10, probably because it takes so much energy to constantly pump blood. Q10 is also found in the food that we eat, particularly in meat and fish.

Cholesterol-lowering drugs, known as statins, are used by almost all people with heart disease. Interestingly enough, statins also reduce the production of the cholesterol-like substance Q10, and deficiency in Q10 has been shown to worsen the prognosis in heart failure. So what happens if you supplement with the substance?

Half of the study's 420 participants with severe heart failure received supplementation with 300 mg CoQ10 daily for two years. The other half received a placebo. What do you think happened?

The Results

The results were presented at the Heart Failure Conference in Lisbon in May 2013. Participants who received Q10 got:

- Half the risk of dying during the study (9% as compared to 17%)
- Almost half the risk of acute heart problems (14% as compared to 25%)
- More often improvement of symptoms

What Does This Mean?

The results of the study are dramatic, but the study is relatively small and not yet published. Moreover, the study is partly funded by companies marketing Q10 supplements. Thus we can't take the results as a self-evident truth.

However, interestingly enough a previous small study on children with heart failure also showed an [improvement from supplementation with Q10](#). An improvement was also seen in a [meta-analysis of previous studies](#) of Q10 and heart failure published this February. If these results continue to be repeated in larger future studies probably all people with heart failure will be offered supplementation. As tens of millions of people worldwide suffer from heart failure this could be somewhat revolutionary.

As usual, the development runs the risk of being slowed down because no pharmaceutical company can patent Q10. It is an endogenous substance present in the food we eat, though in smaller amounts than those tested in the this study. Anyone can make and sell the supplement.

By all accounts, supplementation of Q10 is safe and essentially free from side effects. The only exception is that it, like many other substances, may reduce the effectiveness of the medication Warfarin somewhat (the Warfarin dose may need to be slightly increased in the future when taking Q10).

In the study above the dose **100 mg three times daily** of Q10 was used (this corresponds to the amount of Q10 in ten kg (22 lbs) of meat daily).

The same supplement may easily be bought without a prescription in health food stores.