



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TITLE: Better nutrition improves behaviour in schools

About IFBB

The Institute for Food Brain and Behaviour (IFBB) is a UK charity making evidence-based policy recommendations, in the area of neuroscience and nutrition.

About the School

The Robert Clack School is a mixed comprehensive school and has approximately 2000 pupils. It serves a disadvantaged community in Dagenham, East London and prides itself on its commitment to continual and consistent improvement.

The Study

The IFBB arranged a research trial that tested the effects of vitamin, mineral and omega-3 supplementation on behaviour in school aged children.

196 children aged 16 to 18 enrolled into the 12 week [double-blind randomised placebo-controlled] trial where they were split into two groups. One group were given the nutritional supplements while the other group were given placebos.

Blood samples were taken to measure the change in omega-3, omega-6, vitamin and mineral levels over the study. These were low at the start of the study and significantly improved in the treatment group receiving the nutrient supplements over the 12 weeks.

Behaviour change was measured using the Conners scale and school disciplinary records. Using the disruptive behaviour scale, the results showed that the behaviour in the students receiving the supplements improved, while the behaviour of the pupils receiving the placebo worsened.

When comparing the well behaved and badly behaved students, the poorly behaved students' behaviour improved while they were taking the nutrient supplements.

Results suggest that nutritional supplementation improves behaviour in school aged children.

The Article

The British Journal of Nutrition, the leading journal in this field, has published the findings.



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The article was published on 17 November 2015, and adds to the extensive body of research in this area.

'A randomised double-blind placebo-controlled trial investigating the behavioural effects of vitamin, mineral and n-3 fatty acid supplementation in typically developing adolescent school'

The article can be found online at

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007114515004390>

What does the Institute think?

With funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation the IFBB was able to facilitate this crucial research. This study confirmed what previous research has shown, that improving the diets of disadvantaged children helps to help improve behaviour.

Dr Jonathan Tamman, principal researcher on the study, said *"Our research adds to the growing body of evidence that nutrition can impact the cognitive health and behaviour of children, not least from underprivileged backgrounds. These findings have implications for public health policy and are useful in working towards the aim of understanding how improvements in dietary intake can benefit the health and lives of individuals and society."*

Prue Leith, IFBB Patron, said *"It amazes me that so many people are surprised to learn that what we eat affects the brain. For goodness sake, we know it affects the body, and isn't the brain part of the body? But at last we are beginning to be able to prove the effect on the brain, and therefore on our behaviour, of different foods.."*

Chief Executive of the IFBB Dr Richard Marsh commented *"It is extremely important we continue to research the impact that nutrition has on brain function. Having robust scientific evidence at the heart of our public messages is essential to the IFBB."*

The IFBB believes it is important that all children receive a balanced diet with a wide range of vitamins, minerals and fats not only for growth and development but also to help improve behaviour.

ENDS

1. The Institute for Food, Brain & Behaviour (IFBB) exists to improve the lives of individuals and communities by conducting research into the link between nutrition and behaviour, promoting public understanding and working to effect policy change.

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3. For more information contact Richard Marsh, Chief Executive, on 0800 644 0322 or richard@ifbb.org.uk or please visit our website <http://www.ifbb.org.uk/>
4. Can provide interviews with lead researchers on this study.
5. The full publication of the article' can be found here:
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007114515004390>
6. The Conners Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales (Conners CBRS™) is designed to provide a complete overview of child and adolescent concerns and disorders. Those working in the field of child and youth psychology can use the Conners CBRS to assess a wide spectrum of behaviors, emotions, academic, and social problems in today's youth.