

Can Zinc help treat depression?

It's well known that zinc is critical to the [healthy operation](#) of the human immune system — put simply, the base metal allows the body to respond properly to infectious diseases. However, an article published recently in *Biological Psychiatry* suggests that zinc may also be useful in treating depression.

“A growing body of evidence demonstrates that experimental zinc deficiency can induce depressive-like behavior in animals, which can be effectively reversed by zinc supplementation,” Psych Central [quotes](#) the authors, all from the Sunnybrook Research Institute at the University of Toronto, as saying.

The team came to that conclusion after analyzing 17 studies that together measure blood-zinc concentrations in 1,643 depressed patients and 804 control participants, Psych Central explains. Psychiatric inpatients were involved in 10 of those studies, while seven involved community samples.

While the authors note that “association studies cannot determine the direction of causation, a causal association between zinc status and depression is biologically plausible.” That’s due in part to zinc’s role in the immune system, as well as its antioxidant properties and “multiple roles in regulating [brain circuits] and cognitive function.”

As a result, they believe the relationship between “zinc status and depression” should be looked into further, as should the “potential benefits of zinc supplementation in depressed patients.”