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# The Effects of Supplemental Vitamin E and Selenium on Feline Immunity

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# Abstract

Both vitamin E and selenium are essential for optimal immune function and their supplementation in the diet is known to enhance various immune parameters in many species. Immune function may be enhanced further by their combined supplementation (Kubena & McMurray, 1996). There have been very few studies on the effects of vitamin E supplementation on immune function in the cat and it appears that vitamin E does not produce the same enhancement of immune parameters that has been found in other species, although older cats may benefit from supplementation (Hayek *et al.*, 2000). No studies have investigated the effects of selenium supplementation or of combined vitamin E and selenium supplementation on immune function in the cat. The aim of this study was to examine the effects of both single and combined supplementation of vitamin E and selenium on immune function in the cat.

The 4 week study followed a 3x3 factorial design with 9 diets, including a control or basal diet containing 68.2 IU/kg DM Vitamin E and 0.38 mg/kg DM selenium, and 8 diets supplemented with moderate or high levels of Vitamin E (250 or 500IU/kg DM diet) and/ or Selenium (2 or 10mg/kg DM diet). Blood samples were analysed for immune cell phenotype expression, lymphocyte proliferation to concanavalin A and phytohaemagglutinin, phagocytosis, immunoglobulin G concentration and prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> concentration. Results were analysed in SAS by mixed procedure repeated measures analysis.

Vitamin E supplementation at both a moderate and high level were found to significantly increase lymphocyte proliferative responses to concanavalin A and phytohaemagglutinin, whether or not selenium was supplemented in the diet. Phagocytic activity was significantly increased by vitamin E and combined vitamin E and selenium supplementation. Selenium supplementation alone had no significant effect on any of the immune parameters measured. None of the supplemental diets were found to have a significant effect on the expression of immune cell phenotypes, immunoglobulin G concentration or prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> concentration. Overall, a moderate level (250 IU/kg DM) of vitamin E supplementation may benefit feline immune health when supplemented in the diet. A higher level of vitamin E

supplementation is unlikely to offer any added benefit to immune health and would add unnecessary cost to the manufacture of the diet. Selenium supplementation appears to offer no benefit to immune health in cats.

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# Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>1. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The Immune System	2
1.2.1 Innate Immunity	2
1.2.2 Acquired Immunity	4
1.3 Free Radical Production and Activity	6
1.3.1 Lipid Peroxidation	6
1.3.2 Activation of Free Radicals	7
1.4 Antioxidant Activity	8
1.4.1 Antioxidant Enzymes	8
1.4.2 Antioxidant Nutrients	10
1.5 Effects of Free Radicals and Antioxidants on the Immune System	10
1.6 Effects of Nutrient Supplementation on Immune function	12
1.7 Vitamin E and Immune Function	14
1.7.1 Vitamin E	14
1.7.2 Prostaglandin Production	15
1.7.3 Cytokine Production	16
1.7.4 Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids	17

1.7.5 Effects of Vitamin E Supplementation on Immune Function	17
1.7.6 Vitamin E Studies in the Cat	20
1.7.7 Safety of Vitamin E Supplementation	22
1.8 Selenium and Immune Function	23
1.8.1 Selenium	23
1.8.2 Arachidonic Acid Metabolism	24
1.8.3 Cancer Prevention	26
1.8.4 Selenium Deficiency and Supplementation	26
1.8.5 Studies of Selenium Activity in the Cat	28
1.8.6 Safety of Selenium Supplementation	29
1.9 Combined Vitamin E and Selenium Supplementation and Immune Function	30
1.9.1 Vitamin E and Selenium Deficiency and Supplementation	30
1.10 Safety and Efficacy of Nutrient Supplementation	32
1.11 Summary	33
1.12 Aims of Research	34
<b>2. MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>36</b>
2.1 Animals	36
2.2 Limitations of Study	37
2.3 Diets	37
2.4 Immunophenotyping	38
2.5 Lymphocyte Proliferation	39
2.6 Phagocytosis	39
2.7 Immunoglobulin G ELISA	40
2.8 Prostaglandin E2 ELISA	40
2.9 Data Analysis	41
<b>3. RESULTS</b>	<b>42</b>
3.1 Animal Age and Body Weight	42
3.2 Immune Cell Phenotypes	45
3.2.1 CD4 <sup>+</sup> Cell Marker	45
3.2.2 CD8 <sup>+</sup> Cell Marker	46
3.2.3 CD14 <sup>+</sup> Cell Marker	46

3.2.4 B <sup>+</sup> Cell Marker	48
3.3 Lymphocyte Proliferation	49
3.3.1 Concanavalin A	49
3.3.2. Phytohaemagglutinin	51
3.4 Phagocytic Activity	54
3.5 Immunoglobulin G ELISA	57
3.6 Prostaglandin E2 ELISA	58
<b>4. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>83</b>

# List of Tables

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1	Effects of vitamin E supplementation on different immune parameters	19
1.2	Effects of selenium supplementation on different immune parameters	27
1.3	Effects of vitamin E and selenium supplementation on different immune parameters	31
2.1	Supplemental levels (wt/kg DM) of vitamin E and/ or selenium added to diets	38
3.1	Average age (years) ( $\pm$ SEM) and number of male and female cats in each dietary group	42
3.2	Vitamin E supplemented groups in which the lymphocyte proliferative response to Concanavalin A (Con A) ( $\pm$ SEM) increased significantly during a 4 week trial	50
3.3	Vitamin E supplemented groups in which the lymphocyte proliferative response to phytohaemagglutinin (PHA) ( $\pm$ SEM) increased significantly during a 4 week trial	52
3.4	Vitamin E and / or selenium supplemented groups in which peripheral blood leukocyte phagocytic activity ( $\pm$ SEM) increased significantly during a 4 week trial	55

# List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page
1.1	Mechanisms of lipid peroxidation by free radical species. (a) lipid peroxidation; (b) formation of peroxy radical; (c) continuation of lipid peroxidation chain reaction (Halliwell <i>et al.</i> , 1995)	7
1.2	Antioxidant mechanisms of superoxide dismutase (a) and catalase (b) (Bendich, 1990)	9
1.3	Antioxidant mechanisms of glutathione peroxidase (a & b) and glutathione reductase (c) (Bendich, 1990)	9
1.4	Chemical structure of $\alpha$ -tocopherol (Hayek <i>et al.</i> , 2000)	14
1.5	Quenching of the peroxy radical by vitamin E (Halliwell <i>et al.</i> , 1995)	14
1.6	Regeneration of vitamin E by vitamin C (a), glutathione (b) and coenzyme Q (c) (Halliwell <i>et al.</i> , 1995)	15
1.7	Metabolism of arachidonic acid	25
2.1	Experimental trial design	36
2.2	Factorial design of trial	37
3.1	Average body weight (g) of cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium before and during trial	43
3.2	Average change in body weight (%) over time of cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium before and during trial	44
3.3	CD4 <sup>+</sup> cell expression (%) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	45
3.4	CD8 <sup>+</sup> cell expression (%) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	46

*Continued...*

3.5	CD14 <sup>+</sup> cell expression (%) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	47
3.6	B <sup>+</sup> cell expression (%) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	48
3.7	Lymphocyte proliferative responses to Concanavalin A (Con A) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	49
3.8	Lymphocyte proliferative responses to phytohaemagglutinin (PHA) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	51
3.9	Phagocytic Activity (%) of peripheral blood leukocytes in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	54
3.10	Immunoglobulin G concentration in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	57
3.11	Prostaglandin E2 concentration (pg/mL) (difference between un-stimulated and stimulated samples) in blood ( $\pm$ SEM) collected from cats fed one of nine diets containing supplemental levels of vitamin E and/ or selenium over a four week period	58

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# List of Abbreviations

APC	Antigen Presenting Cell
CAT	Catalase
CoQH	Coenzyme Q
Con A	Concanavalin A
DM	Dry Matter
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid
GPx	Glutathione Peroxidase
H	High
H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	Hydrogen Peroxide
IgG	Immunoglobulin G
IU	International Units
M	Moderate
MHC	Major Histocompatibility Complex
NADPH	Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide Phosphate
O <sub>2</sub>	Oxygen
PGE <sub>2</sub>	Prostaglandin E <sub>2</sub>
PGG <sub>2</sub>	Prostaglandin G <sub>2</sub>
PGH <sub>2</sub>	Prostaglandin H <sub>2</sub>
PHA	Phytohaemagglutinin
Se	Selenium
SOD	Superoxide Dismutase
Vit E	Vitamin E