

ALLERGY, VITAMINS

VITAMANIA

10.03.2008

For everybody who wants to follow up the most recent discussion about allergy promoting effects of vitamin D here is a short summary. The Harvard group basically wrote three articles that were immediately contradicted. The comment on the first article in JACI was [by a NIH researcher](#)

Several studies, including 2 conducted in cohorts from higher latitudes where infant vitamin D supplementation is quite prevalent, have shown that supplementation in infancy with vitamins is associated with increased incidence for allergies, whereas other experimental data suggest that vitamin D could contribute to allergy.

The second article in Thorax was [written by a British researcher](#)

The enthusiastic editorial ... may have left some readers with the impression that a single cause of the rise in asthma, multiple sclerosis, inflammatory bowel disease and type 1 diabetes in the West has now been discovered, namely vitamin D deficiency, and that primary prevention of asthma and autoimmune disease is just around the corner. Indeed, their bold conclusion portrays vitamin D supplementation as a likely panacea for many ills worldwide ... I would argue therefore that the vitamin D story is, at present, rather more confused....

while I wrote [on their most recent](#) article

Together with other studies not mentioned in their review that are testing effects of different vitamin D preparations, cod liver oil, and supplemented margarine the current picture of a sensitization risk caused by vitamin D supplements is rather clear.

In the traditional publication system, the last word is always with the primary authors but with blogs the discussion can continue ;-)

I am quite happy that after years of ignorance (usually stage 1 of any new hypothesis), we have now reached stage 2 (controversial discussion). I already predict stage 3 (common sense) to become reality as soon as if we will have the first RCT results at hand. It remains the question why there is such a different perception in the community. I can only speculate by pointing to an earlier [NEJM book review on](#) *Vitamania: Vitamins in American culture*.

Addendum

Here are examples for 2006/stage 1 intentionally ignoring VD effects on allergy: a [NEJM](#) review manages to talk about vitamin A, C, E but not D – and again [NEJM](#) who quotes beneficial effects on wheeze but ignores adverse effects on atopy.

To be fair there is already a [transition to stage 3](#)

The positive association between the other fat soluble vitamin, vitamin D and atopy is less surprising, as infant supplementation with vitamin D has previously been reported to be linked to higher rates of asthma and allergic rhinitis.