Vitamin E Nutriture of Newborns and Infants in Brazil

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During the past nine years, several investigations have been carried out to evaluate the amount of vitamin E in the nutrition of newborns and infants during early life. In general, the vitamin E status of the adult population in Brazil is quite satisfactory (1); however, vitamin E status of newborns and infants subjected to different types of feeding requires critical examination.

A study of maternal, placental, and newborn levels of vitamin E revealed that a large number of babies, especially prematures, are born with low blood levels of vitamin E (2). Further studies with regard to the placental transport of vitamin E indicated that the low vitamin E levels in the newborn are due to a transient deficiency of a specific lipoprotein in the blood (3). Vitamin E status of infants in early life is primarily determined by the type of infant feeding commonly adopted in Brazil. Breastfeeding is ideal for maintaining adequate vitamin E status (4). A cow's milk regimen, still very common in Brazil, lowers blood vitamin E levels and modifies the hematological indices (5). Additional studies are being conducted with regard to an appropriate method for determining vitamin E in the blood of hyperbilirubinemic infants (6).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Supported by the International Scientific Exchange Program of NSERC, Canada, and CNPq, Brazil.

REFERENCES