

VITAMIN 'B' LACK IS MODERN CURSE CLAIMS CHEMIST

Unrecognized Form of Beriberi Widely Prevalent—Stripping of Hulls From Grain, Machine Age Error

By Howard W. Blakeslee (Associated Press Science Editor) CHAPEL HILL, N. C., April 15.—(AP)—Evidence that an unrecognized form of beriberi, Oriental nerve-destroying disease not supposed to exist in the United States, is widely prevalent in this country was presented to the American Chemical Society today.

Beriberi is caused by lack of vitamin B. In this country no one completely lacks this vitamin, but partial vitamin B starvation is shown to be widespread in experiments reported by Dr. R. H. Williams, New York City research chemist. Grain hulls important. The Oriental beriberi is caused by eating rice without the hulls, the part of the grain containing the vitamin. Dr. Williams said that, although grain eating is older than history, the practice of stripping grains of their hulls is a product of the machine age. "It is reasonable to suppose," he said, "that modern trends in daily habits have much to do with modern trends in disease and physical defects. I am thinking particularly of the rise or relatively greater persistence of constitutional disease such as diabetes and kidney troubles."

He reported experiments at Oxford university, England, showing that vitamin B probably aids in clearing poisons from the body. This is particularly true of the poisons that naturally form in the brain and kidneys. Vitamin B speeds the process of oxidation by which oxygen burns up the waste products.

Oxidation hindered. Absence of the vitamin apparently prevents the oxidation process from going to completion. These experiments, he said, were done by Dr. R. A. Peters.

Research on this vitamin's possible influence on human life, he said, particularly in constitutional and mental diseases, has started in hospitals and medical schools in many parts of the world, but results are not complete enough for conclusive deductions. "In the well fed western world we protect ourselves from beriberi by variety in diet," he said, "but it is by no means certain that the average intake of this vitamin is optimal. There are few foods in which it is superabundant, and many staples are almost devoid of it. Certainly many individuals suffer at times from lack of the vitamin, particularly women during pregnancy and lactation, and many of the unpleasant symptoms accompanying these conditions have been attributed to lack of vitamin B."

FATHER IN ATTEMPT TO SLAY DAUGHTERS

REDWOOD CITY, Cal., April 15.—(AP)—James E. Tompkins, 50, unemployed hood carrier, fired three shots at his young twin daughters today, Constable P. B. Grill said, and then slashed his wrists as officers hurled tear gas bombs into his house.

Louise Tompkins, 13, was struck in the arm and chest but physicians said the wounds were not serious. Her twin sister, Alice, kicked her father in the stomach, as he leaned over their bed, and deflected the weapon.

Police records revealed Tompkins attempted suicide in 1920, and last April 6 was arrested on a battery complaint signed by his wife. She then swore to an insanity complaint, but withdrew it two days ago.

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