

D is 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D₃; vitamin D is about half as active in stimulating calcium uptake in chick intestine maintained in organ culture²⁰ and likely has a parallel effect on aluminum absorption.

Regardless of whether dietary vitamin D acts directly or indirectly through 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D₃ it does increase tissue levels of aluminum in various animals^{9-14,18} and in humans.^{15,16} Virtually all the vitamin D that humans consume is from food additives; this makes it more feasible to control vitamin D ingestion than to control aluminum intake. If further evidence confirms an association between vitamin D and the accumulation of aluminum in the brain it may be important to control the ingestion of vitamin D as well as that of aluminum.

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Glandular tularemia with typhoidal features in a Manitoba child

I read with great interest the recent report by Dr. Pierre J. Plourde and associates (*Can Med Assoc J* 1992; 146: 1953-1955) about this fairly rare disease.

The authors' statement that isolated outbreaks have been re-

ported only in Quebec in the last 25 years, however, is erroneous. There have been two cases reported in Newfoundland within the last 15 years: one in 1981, which was confirmed by the Department of Health, and one in 1983, which I reported.¹

As noted in the discussion of my article it certainly appears that the incidence of tularemia is low in Newfoundland. However, given the broad spectrum of clinical manifestations, there may be subclinical cases, from mild, non-ulcerative glandular lesions to more severe forms, as described in the *CMAJ* article.

I also note that Plourde and associates do not mention the use of tetracycline. In the case that I saw, tetracycline settled down the disease process, and the patient recovered. Although tetracycline is effective, relapse may occur.

A high degree of suspicion is needed for this disease, or cases may very well be missed.

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The therapeutic value of cats

Dr. Douglas Waugh's article in the Apr. 1, 1992, issue of *CMAJ* (146: 1233) should bring a chuckle to those who feel a kinship either to cats of all ages or only to lovable kittens.

Although our family has had long acquaintance with both cats and dogs I must admit feeling somewhat intimidated by our feline friends.

Could it be that I am somewhat thin-skinned? (I could blame it on an allergy, which was actually responsible for my only bout of