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George D. Lundberg, M.D., Editor
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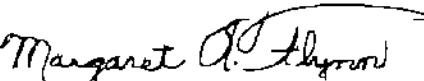
Letter to the Editor:


Atherogenesis and the Homocysteine-Folate-Cobalamin Triad

The June 11, 1997 JAMA article about plasma homocysteine as a risk factor for vascular disease by Graham et. al. ⁽¹⁾ was excellent. However, their recommendation of randomized controlled trials testing vitamins and plasma homocysteine calls for restudy of what we already know, instead of action to correct the problem. Our article about atherogenesis and the homocysteine-folate-cobalamin triad, published in June in *J Am Coll Nutr* ⁽²⁾ ends the argument and calls for action. In our paper ⁽²⁾, we documented that one-third of elderly Caucasians, median age 65 in an ongoing University of Missouri-Columbia nutrition and aging study, had atherogenic levels of homocysteine accompanied by early cobalamin deficiencies but no folate deficiency. At the end of our paper we referred to our petition ⁽³⁾ to the FDA to require that all foods and pills fortified with folic acid also contain cobalamin because of our concern that folic acid supplementation in the elderly may conceal cobalamin deficiencies until neuropsychiatric damage occurs. The FDA has already mandated ^(2,3) that all grains be fortified with folic acid effective January 1, 1998.

- 1) Graham IM, Daly LE, Refsum HM, et al. Plasma homocysteine as a risk factor for vascular disease. JAMA 1997; 277:1775-1781.
- 2) Flynn MA, Herbert V, Nolph G, Kraus G. Atherogenesis and the homocysteine-folate-cobalamin triad: do we need standardized analyses? J Am Coll Nutr 1997; 16:258-67.
- 3) Herbert V, Bigaoutte J. Commentary: Call for endorsement of a petition to the Food and Drug Administration to always add vitamin B₁₂ to any folate fortification or supplement. Am J Clin Nutr 1997; 65:572-573.

Sincerely,


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