

Letter to the Editor regarding the article: “Vitamin D and Prevention of Chronic Diseases” by António Vaz-Carneiro. Acta Med Port. 2017;30:351-3.

Carta ao Editor relativa ao artigo: “Doenças Crónicas Vitamina D e Prevenção de Doenças Crónicas” de António Vaz-Carneiro. Acta Med Port. 2017;30:351-3.

Keywords: Chronic Diseases; Prevention; Vitamin D

Palavras-chave: Doenças Crónicas; Prevenção; Vitamina D

Dear Editor,

I have read the very interesting editorial by Vaz-Carneiro recently published in this Journal about an alleged preventive role of vitamin D utilization in chronic diseases.¹ The author highlighted the favorable effects of vitamin D related to prevention and treatment of bone diseases; and absence of consensus on optimal dosage of this vitamin to prevent other chronic conditions because its serum levels and dosages are variable both from disease to disease and among patients, as well as in the same individual.¹ He also emphasized that the body exposure to sun for 7 to 40 minutes in the winter or 6 to 7 minutes in the summer is sufficient to maintain adequate serum levels of vitamin D; and this vitamin only reduces mortality in institutionalized patients with low vitamin D₃.¹ Other main item involved possible misconception about the vitamin D normal serum levels considered superior to 20 ng/mL, whereas the most of patients have lower needs.¹ The author also focused the daily ingestion of elevated doses of vitamin D based

on ‘recommended dietary allowance’ related to the alleged normal serum level; specially potential adverse effects as urolithiasis and bone fractures, as well as economic burden.¹ The major conclusion was that significant scientific evidences are lacking to justify the vitamin D administration to prevent chronic diseases, and this should not be stimulated.¹ Without the needed confirmation, vitamin D supplementation would be overtreatment, mainly in the setting where the adverse effects may be more significant than benefits.¹ In summary, the well posed topics have practical relevance because put a counterpart to numerous publications about vitamin D on prevention of diseases and global mortality.¹

Additionally, some comments are added on epidemiological features of vitamin D based on a Brazilian review that included references about effects on hormone activity, immune response, and prevention of tumors, arterial hypertension and type 2 diabetes.² Accordingly with the editorial, the review include controversies about vitamin D levels and seasonality of UVB radiation, variations by geographic areas, relationships between levels of vitamin D, age, gender and ethnicity of the patients, and parathormone levels.¹

The authors concluded that vitamin D plays a main role on bone metabolism and some immunological processes, adequate intake prevent rickets in children and adult osteoporosis related to low serum levels, but aspects of deficiency are controversial.^{1,2} Therefore, further research is needed to better clear some of the topics herein reported.

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