

## Editorial

# Vitamin D – the big D-bate

In this issue of our journal we have invited a number of experts to comment on the recommended levels of intake of vitamin D<sup>(1–9)</sup>. This invitation is done in order to shed some light on the ongoing debate regarding the increased recommended level of intake of vitamin D from the Institute of Medicine North America<sup>(10)</sup>. Our Associate Editor Oliver Gillie has also written his own editorial in the area<sup>(11)</sup>.

The journal finds this debate of great importance, not only as a part of a sound scientific debate in general but also with regard to the intriguing nature of vitamin D and the wealth of factors that influence our vitamin D status. Environmental factors, clothing, seasonal factors, skin colour and intake all have an influence on vitamin D status: the delicate balance between them provides a challenging perspective for public health nutritionists. A recent study of children in Iran revealed a substantial proportion (32.9%) of children aged 15–23 months with vitamin D at insufficiency levels<sup>(12)</sup>, significantly more among girls. Iran has a system for encouraging supplementation but the level of compliance is uncertain. This is just one example out of many, showing the need for comprehensive work in this area towards a common consensus on needs, intake, formation and uptake of vitamin D, followed up by policy and action.

Clearly, this is a research field which not only intrigues us but also one that encourages debate. We heartily welcome more debate on vitamin D as a nutritional issue and also as an overall health issue in relation to environment, shading, skin cancer risk and pollution, as well as outdoor play and activities. We look forward to receiving your views and suggestions.

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