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### **New Insights into Vitamin D During Pregnancy, Lactation & Early Infancy**

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Hale Publishing, 2010

164 pages, illustrated, references, index, US\$24.95, softcover

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Vitamin D has received much press relative to its link with rickets as well as with inflammatory diseases, cardiovascular disease, long-latency diseases like multiple sclerosis and lupus, and various cancers. This book provides a wealth of knowledge into this precursor to one of the most powerful hormones in the body. Written in a conversational tone, the book is a potent primer for acquiring the background and knowledge clinicians should possess when working with pregnant and lactating mothers.

The book starts with a fascinating timeline of vitamin D from the mid 1600s to the present day, followed by the discovery of the link to rickets and its presence as the active component in cod liver oil that prevents rickets. A fascinating section looks at how changes in lifestyle (e. g., use of sunscreen and keeping infants out of direct sunlight) have led to one of the largest worldwide nutrient deficiency epidemics. Vitamin D recommendations that actually set the stage for vitamin D deficiency are discussed. The authors then focus on the results of vitamin D deficiency during pregnancy and lactation, carrying their analysis into early childhood and later adult life. Controversies surrounding vitamin D supplementation in infants and mothers are discussed including the fears that contribute to deficiency states. Research is abundantly provided for changing the vitamin D supplementation requirements, especially since current recommendations are far too low to affect vitamin D content in human milk.

Especially pertinent to lactation consultants and maternal/child health clinicians is the chart that summarizes the new suggested vitamin D supplementation regimen for pregnant and lactating women. These recommendations are based on extensive research that is presented in the text (with 31 pages of references) and far exceed the current rate of supplementation for infants over a year old as well as pregnant and lactating women. A discussion of the prophylactic supplementation of breastfed infants compares and contrasts research on the amount of vitamin D supplement needed when the mother has not been supplemented and the infant does not receive sufficient sunlight exposure.

This book is a valuable addition to the knowledge base of all health care providers working with pregnant and lactating women.

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