

Vitamin D recommendations for BME staff

April 27, 2020

Recommendation on Vit D supplements to boost Immunity against COVID-19

Dear BAPIO member,

Both Professor David Anderson and I are accredited endocrinologists. We are extremely concerned at the apparent lack of effective protection of medical, nursing and other health care workers (HCW) against coronavirus. We also have major worries about the disproportionate coronavirus mortality among BAME HCWs. We believe that Vitamin D3 deficiency is a major risk factor for severe coronavirus infection, for which there is accumulating evidence. People born with darker skin receive less UV light in the deeper layers where D3 is made and so, are prone to more severe D-deficiency at the end of winter in northern latitudes than their fairerskinned counterparts.

Prof David Anderson is retired, lives in Italy, and has access to vials of D3, 2.5 mg (100,000 IU) which is appropriate amount of Vitamin D3 as a booster dose for Vit D deficient individual. The contents of one vial taken by mouth should raise levels of 25(OH)D3 for 2 to 3 months, to the minimum that the immune system needs to provide the first line of defence against this new virus. It will not prevent infection itself, but by providing front-line resistance, it is likely to reduce it to the level of a severe cold. In the presence of inadequate levels of 25(OH)D3 the virus can get past this vitamin D-dependent first line of defence and cause severe lung disease that carries a high risk of death.

We recommend that ideally the BAME population, especially front-line staff, should get their Vitamin D3 levels checked and get appropriate replacement as required. In the absence of the test and if one is not on regular Vit D3 supplement, a booster dose of Vit D3 100,000 units has been suggested. Since in UK, 100,000 I.U. preparation is prescription only, one can get it directly from Prof Anderson. Alternative is a UK preparation, HUXD3 20,000 IU which can be bought over the counter. If not available locally, Milton Pharmacy, Weston super Mare would be happy to supply a pack of 10 tablets at cost price of £2. We advise that, if you are not already taking Vit D supplementation, you can take 100,000 IU. This is safe (1) and will address Vitamin D deficiency quickly.

With best wishes for your personal safety in this difficult time,

Prof Parag Singhal, Consultant Endocrinologist Weston General Hospital and Prof David C Anderson (former Professor of Medicine, University of Manchester and the Chinese University of Hong Kong)

PS: The above advice is our joint recommendation and not BAPIO Policy (1) LARGE, SINGLE-DOSE, ORAL VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTATION IN ADULT POPULATIONS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4128480/>

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