Vitamin A Deficiency In Developing Countries

Micronutrient deficiencies are one of the leading causes of malnutrition, especially in the developing world. Vitamin deficiencies can lead to impaired growth and development, birth defects, visual impairments, and other health issues. (Beaudry) Over two billion people suffer from Micronutrient deficiencies on a global scale, and 25% of the population is at risk or suffering from Vitamin A deficiency(VAD) (Sommer). VAD seriously impacts the lives of people living in low-income areas. There are many things that can cause VAD, including inadequate intake, socioeconomic barriers, and affordability. These barriers cause unnecessary suffering, especially when there are preventative measures. (Rice, Sommer)

VAD has been established as a major health issue in low-income and developing areas. This micronutrient deficiency is usually associated with a low intake of fresh fruits and vegetables that result in minor health problems. Many people think that the results in only minor issues. But in reality, VAD can lead to more serious health problems. Symptoms of VAD can start as slow development and metabolism, but it can progress and cause permanent blindness. Although VAD is usually not interpreted as an issue, it is the leading cause of preventable blindness among children. Because of this, it is important that people are able to know and understand this illness.

There are two types of vitamin A, both of which are necessary for the body to function properly. Preformed vitamin A is known as the active form and can be used by the body as it is. It is found in animal products, especially liver and liver oils. Provitamin A page numbers?? carotenoid is the other source. It is found in plant sources and is converted into retinol(Vitamin A) in the gut. These two forms of Vitamin A are required for your health but found in very different sources. This means that there is usually only one type being regularly consumed. Why does it mean this? Although this is sufficient for your body, the body functions better when both types are present. This what? does not cause VAD, but it does cause people to be at an increased risk for VAD as well as other illnesses.

Vitamin A is required for many of the body’s functions. It is used by the body to maintain regular eyesight, have normal cellular differentiation, energy production, blood clotting, and immune function. citation? Without vitamin A, a lot of the bodies processes are affected. Once someone is deficient, they are more susceptible to other illnesses because so much of their body has been affected. The vitamin A levels are further depleted by illnesses such as diarrhea, measles and respiratory infections. Once these illnesses have been contracted, their levels of vitamin A continue to decrease because of the increased demand for the immune system to respond. This continues until the person becomes severely deficient.

VAD affects young children’s health very severely. There are approximately 190 million preschool-age children who are affected by VAD. Most of these cases are present in countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. Young children in these areas do not have access to the same food sources as others do. Probably a number of complicated and interrelated reasons but still say something? This results in a lack of fresh fruits and vegetables which can lead to micronutrient deficiencies. Lack of vitamin A in children can cause severe visual problems and in severe cases, blindness. There is also an increased risk of illness because of the weakened

immune system. This can result in death from common childhood infections, for example, diarrhea and measles. This what? VAD? Be specific causes thousands of unnecessary deaths each year.

Vitamin A is essential for pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding. Vitamin A is required for almost every step of embryonic growth, including the development of the heart, lungs, kidneys and nervous system. Citation? It also plays an important role when women are closer to giving birth because it is necessary for the development of postpartum tissue repair. When women are VAD deficient, it can cause death in the mother and/or child. VAD occurs in these women for a number of reasons: they do not have access to proper food and care, they do not have enough money to buy the proper food or fund the proper care, they do not know that they should be eating certain things.

There are many strategies that have been discussed in order to gain control over VAD. The three most well known and widely practices are dietary diversification, supplementation, education, and fortification. citation

Format -- make sure your indentations are all the same Supplementation includes various potencies of vitamin A being given to children of various ages. cite Doses of 20,000 IU are given at suitable intervals. These doses are reduced in infants and larger doses are given to older children. Supplementation is an easy and effective way to prevent VAD. It is easy because it only has to be done once every year or so by medical experts and doesn’t require constant care and attentiveness to the everyday diet.

Although it seems to be perfect, supplementation of vitamin A can be dangerous. It is widely debated by medical experts that the large doses of vitamin A may actually be more harmful than helpful. cite Large doses of vitamin A can cause birth defects as well as problems with bone density. Although estimates show that the overall deaths from VAD have decreased with supplementation, more research must be conducted in order to avoid negative consequences. cite

Fortification is a way to fortify certain foods with vitamin A in order to add it to your diet. cite For example, fortifying vegetable oil with vitamin A has been hugely successful in reducing VAD.cite Adding large amounts of vitamin A to a common household food can hugely increase the intake of vitamin A, therefore preventing any deficiency. Fortifying different foods can greatly help the intake of micronutrients. By fortifying popular food in a specific area, it has the potential of reaching the entire community and preventing many different deficiencies.

Dietary diversification would include encouraging people to build gardens for themselves or the community in order to receive the vitamins and minerals that they may not receive otherwise. This would be easy because it does not cause a lot of funding but has the potential to be very effective. However, Although it seems like it would be effective, it is extremely hard to educate adults on things that they have never heard of. They don’t understand, care or want to be educated.?? Pretty negative -- cite -- rephrase -- what is their general level of education to begin with? What are the barriers to getting the education? Transportaiton, time, money -- is it mostly women who would be doing this who are overworked anyway?

Education is a way to reach a large audience and make a long term change in people's eating habits. Educating mothers on what VAD is, why they need vitamin A, and what VAD can do to

their loved ones can be an extremely effective way to prevent VAD in this generation and the generations to come. Cite -- isn't this the opposite of what you said above? This would also include sanitation and hygiene. There are nearly 4.5 billion people prone to VAD because of intestinal parasite infections. cite Infections like these require increased levels of vitamin A. This what? Infections? causes lower levels of vitamin A in your body which increases the chance you will contract it. There is also evidence that foodborne diseases, as well as environmental sanitation, have gravely impacted communities by spreading infections that can inhibit the ability to absorb nutrients. This can result from uncovered food, not washing your hands or your body and other basic hygiene measures. I would love to know about some of the boots on the ground efforts to combat this -- but that might be outside the scope of your project -- In general your paper is very well organized and clear -- needs cites.

A substantial amount be specific of children and pregnant women are victims of vitamin A deficiency in developing countries.This is due to poverty along with other socioeconomic restraints. Cite -- explaine Insufficient dietary intake of vitamin A is the predominant cause of Vitamin A deficiency. (5)Vitamin A deficiency usually leads to loss of general health, productivity, prenatal problems, and blindness. There have been attempts to control Vitamin A deficiency in South Asian countries and other developing countries including, dietary diversification, supplementation, and fortification. (7) Large doses of Vitamin A have been given to infants and have proven successful, however, dose to infants started a discussion throughout the scientific community of vitamin toxicity. Dietary diversification has been used and strongly recommended. (7) It is a key way to understand how to avoid Vitamin A deficiency and therefore can be extremely effective prevented Vitamin A deficiency. Fortification is also a popular way to prevent Vitamin A deficiency. By fortifying certain foods, it can help keep vitamin A levels high in communities and therefore prevent Vitamin A deficiency. There are many serious health consequences of Vitamin A deficiency that can damage entire areas and communities. Although it is more common for women and children to be affected by Vitamin A deficiency, the effects can hugely impact the entire community. (6,7) In poorer economies, Vitamin A deficiency has a huge impact on health and productivity(6). New paradigms clearly show that Vitamin A deficiency is a serious issue that must be addressed in order to sustain the health and wellbeing of the population that reside in developing countries. (7)