



219th Lecture Series 7.30pm - 17 March 2021



Professor Susan Lanham-New

Is vitamin D the ‘sunshine superstar’ or is it all media hype?

ABSTRACT

Vitamin D is an extraordinary nutrient – indeed it is not a ‘vital-amine’ in the true sense of the word but instead a prohormone. It is the only nutrient where our main source is not dietary intake but UVB exposure. In the UK, it is only between April to September that vitamin D can be made from direct exposure to sunlight exposure; during October to March, the Zenith angle of the sun means that the UV wavelength is not strong enough. A ‘shadow shorter than your height’ is a great way of telling whether you are in the right UVB range. Vitamin D has a key role to play in musculo-skeletal disease but its effect on other health outcomes are wide-ranging. There has been much talk in the Media of a link between vitamin D and COVID-19: this presentation will review what vitamin D is, how it is metabolised by the body and whether it is important to the prevention of acute respiratory tract infections and COVID-19. The talk will also focus on the difference between the two forms of vitamin D (plant and animal) and will share some new data on vitamin D2 vs. vitamin D3 from a systems biology angle as well as key work on vitamin D with the UK military including Sub-Mariners.

BIOGRAPHY

Susan is Professor of Human Nutrition and Head of the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Surrey in Guildford, England. Her area of research is nutrition and bone health, with a particular focus on vitamin D. She is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) which advises HM Government on UK nutritional issues and is Editor-in-Chief of the Nutrition Society Textbook Series (7 Textbooks, >90,000 sales). She led the Surrey application which won the 2017/2018 Queen’s Anniversary Prize in the area of Food & Nutrition for Health. Susan has published widely on vitamin D issues, including what is the accurate science behind the vitamin D and COVID-19 story.

LINKS

<https://www.nutrition society.org/people/professor-susan-lanham-new>

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/people/susan-lanham-new>

The talk will be given over Zoom and if you would like to join the webinar please email info@royalphil.org and joining information will be sent to you.