

Vitamin D-deficiency rickets still a problem: CPSP data

Important data from a Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program (CPSP) study released this summer confirm that although vitamin D-deficiency rickets is preventable, it continues to affect Canadian children.

Dr. Leanne Ward and her colleagues found 105 confirmed cases of rickets caused by vitamin D deficiency reported between 2002 and 2004. The authors' findings, which were published in the *CMAJ* in July, identify a subset of the paediatric population particularly at risk. These patients presented with significant morbidity, including fractures, limb deformities, poor growth and delayed gross motor milestones. The CPSP study also indicates an urgent need for greater awareness among health care providers and the general public of the risk of vitamin D deficiency in children. Vitamin D supplementation of

exclusively breastfed children and other at-risk populations is critical.

In a related commentary, Dr. Danielle Grenier argues for the importance of national active surveillance programs for safeguarding the health of children and youth. The CPSP is a national disease surveillance network that obtains data through monthly surveys of paediatricians and paediatric subspecialists across Canada.

The CPS First Nations, Inuit and Métis Health Committee recently revised its statement on vitamin D supplementation, published in the September edition of *Paediatrics & Child Health*. In it, the committee recommends increased levels of vitamin D for babies in northern communities, as well as for pregnant and lactating women. *