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DETERMINATION OF VITAMIN A STATUS BY
USING VITAMIN A₂

BY

PUNNEE THAITAWEE (B.Sc. in Biology)

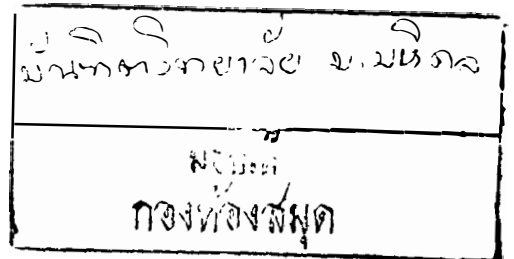
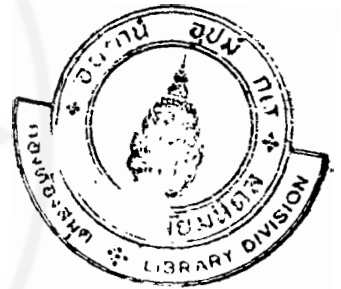
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ABSTRACT

To detect vitamin A deficiency in early stage an isotopic dilution method would be required. In order to avoid using radioisotope vitamin A₂ was used as a tracer molecule since vitamin A₂ is a natural analogue of vitamin A₁ with an extra double bond at 3, 4 position in the cyclohexyl ring.

Various methods to estimate vitamin A₂ in the presence of vitamin A₁ were investigated. Among all the techniques investigated colorimetric method with trichloroacetic acid in chloroform was found to be most suitable since the coloured product of vitamin A₂ absorbed at 690 nm whereas that of vitamin A₁ absorbed at 620 nm.

In rats it was found that vitamin A₂ was present in the blood circulation at a higher concentration than vitamin A₁ when equal amount of vitamin A₂ and vitamin A₁ were given. The concentration of vitamin A₂ in serum increased with time and reached a steady state 5 days after the dose.

The relationship of serum vitamin A₁ : A₂ ratio and liver vitamin A content were studied by giving vitamin A₂ (10, 20, 100 µg) to rats that had different vitamin A content in the liver. At 7 days after the dose there was a linear relationship between serum vitamin A₁ : A₂ ratio and log of liver vitamin A concentration. All three different doses of vitamin A₂ gave the same equation :-

$$Y = 0.747 \log X - 0.256$$

(Y = serum vitamin A₁ : A₂ ratio and X is liver vitamin A concentration in µg/g of liver)

These results indicated that the relationship was independent of the dose. At shorter times (1, 3 days) after the dose of vitamin A₂ there was also a relationship between serum vitamin A₁ : A₂ ratio and liver vitamin A concentration, but this was dependent on dose size. The best condition to estimate vitamin A status was therefore as follows : a small dose of vitamin A₂ (10-100 µg) given to rat for 7 days and assay for serum vitamin A₁ : A₂ ratio. By using these conditions rats of unknown vitamin A status have been tested and found that there was about 15% standard error in calculated concentration from that of assayed values.