

Question 51 – Week of June 20

A recent immigrant to the United States presents with diarrhea, early dementia and rash. He has been on Isoniazid for 9 months for tuberculosis. He has not been eating well. He has no known medical problems other than the tuberculosis. Physical exam shows a malnourished patient with atrophic glossitis, and scaling plaques on sun exposed skin surfaces. Name the most likely deficiency to explain the findings.

- A. Niacin
- B. Zinc
- C. Vitamin B12
- D. Vitamin A

Answer: A

Diarrhea, dementia, dermatitis are classic findings for pellagra or niacin deficiency. The so called “3D’s” can lead to death if untreated. Isoniazid is a known cause of this deficiency. Pellagra can also be seen in dietary deficiency alone or in carcinoid.

Sleisenger and Fordtran’s Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease. Chapter 22 pages 368-369. 9th edition, 2010