

## 323 – B12 Deficiency with Tracey Witty

Steven Bruce

Good evening and welcome back to the Academy for another 90 minutes of great CPD. We have actually had a number of new members join us this week. So if you're one of those are particularly warm welcome to you. This is a great community we've got here. So please don't be shy about putting your own questions and your own opinions to my guest this evening. My studio guest this evening is Tracy witty, who is one of the leading experts in the UK on B 12 deficiency, although I suspect she wouldn't describe herself in those terms. She is not a medical practitioner herself. But she was diagnosed with B 12 deficiency something like 11 years ago now. And since then she has made it her mission to get better treatment for people in a similar position, and to change attitudes about the problem. So while she might not have a formal medical training, I reckon she can scare the pants off pretty much anyone consultant GP osteopath, chiropractor, or anyone else with her in depth knowledge of this particular topic. And one of the key problems areas with this is misdiagnosis. And we're going to be hearing quite a bit about that this evening. And that, of course is of paramount interest to us as primary care practitioners. That of course, and being able to send patients away with the resources they need to get the best possible care. Tracy, welcome back. I think it's been about three years since we last had you in the studio, isn't it in other studio, long ago, considerably smaller, and so on. I'd love to say that we're going to talk about completely new stuff now. But we've got a lot of new members and many people who are going to have seen the last broadcast that we hit. So I suspect we'll cover a lot of old ground. But then again, perhaps the first question to ask is what's changed in the three years?

Tracey Witty

Not a lot. The biggest thing for people would be told efficiency was when the lockdown started. Unfortunately, lots of GPs stopped, or tried to stop B 12 injections for patients and suddenly say that they were okay on B 12. Tablets, which of course simply wasn't true, and caused a lot of harm to people. We are nine years in of trying to make B 12 injections available over the counter from pharmacies. And that just is an ongoing fight really

Steven Bruce

just an extraordinary thing, isn't it? Because I have done a little bit of research into this, as I often do before the shows. And one of the first things I look for is the nice clinical guidelines or whatever we're talking about. Now, you and I spoke before 2020 Last somewhere around when it was. But the

the first discussions on creating a nice guideline on this didn't start on the 2021. And he won't be published until January next year. And I suspect that's an optimistic date as well. This is extraordinary that we haven't even got nice guidelines on something as serious as this.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, there are nice thicker summaries. And CTS is the clinical knowledge summaries. And I was on the stakeholder as a stakeholder for the new North guidance and went to those, you know, initial meetings about that. And we have just made our comments on the potential guidance, but it's unfortunately for only for over 16 so there is no provision for children.

Steven Bruce

Maybe that will come we've got to get start somewhere, haven't we? But hopefully

Tracey Witty

but unfortunately it was trying to recruit paediatricians to Nice to help. So they would, you know, in the initial meetings, we were suggesting that you know, children really need to be covered in this to their worry was that they would have to get a paediatric paediatric neurologist or paediatric haematologist or paediatric and on and on. And unfortunately, it seems they weren't able to access any of that for the committee. Yeah. Which is really unfortunate,

Steven Bruce

is we're gonna get into some more detail about what he's actually going on in people who have B 12 deficiency. And as I mentioned, you're already one of those. But you haven't perhaps maybe you should just give us a bit of a bit more detailed background on yourself and your route into what you're doing now.

Tracey Witty

Right. Well, I my first route into it was a loved one who was misdiagnosed with bipolar was presenting with psychosis and many other symptoms of B 12 deficiency, but unfortunately, the doctors involved in her care didn't recognise me to have deficiency symptoms. They were looking for more classic pernicious anaemia style symptoms, so ataxic gait and numbness and tingling and haven't really an understanding of the mental health side of things. And so

Steven Bruce

remission says I'm going to interrupt you sorry if that's, that's okay. pernicious pernicious anaemia is one of those dire, alternative diagnoses which is commonly presented isn't it when someone has Beto deficiency is the first thing they sort of seize upon and say that's what the problem is.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, well, pernicious anaemia is just one of many causes and it's auto immunity. That's said to be the most common Um cause of B 12 deficiency. And so unfortunately our doctors, if you are presenting with B 12 deficiency symptoms, and you're found to be B 12 deficient, but you haven't got the positive intrinsic factor test, then oftentimes doctors don't see that the deficiency is as serious as if it was a straight pernicious anaemia diagnosis,

Steven Bruce

how do we carry out a diagnosis? an intrinsic factor test. So that's a

Tracey Witty

blood test, but it's low sensitivity so it can send back off.

Steven Bruce

And it is, I suppose, I've interrupted your story and gonna take this down a rabbit hole, but that's gonna happen all the time this evening, I suspect. What what in the doctor's arsenal is going to make him or her think B 12 deficiency? Because I really doubt that it's high on the the radar, is it? Yeah, unfortunately,

Tracey Witty

it's not. And I think the problem is that the most common presenting symptoms can be depression or fatigue. And so people might end up with a diagnosis of depression and then chronic fatigue syndrome me. And it's really, really unfortunate that often our doctors are not aware of the full plethora of symptoms that you could be suffering from there, you know, ranging from neurological symptoms from tinnitus to a tremor, to cardiovascular symptoms, to gastrointestinal symptoms, muscular skeletal, there are so many from head to toe, you could be suffering from a myriad symptoms, and each, each different person might be manifesting a different set. So in a sense, they may look like nonspecific so it's tricky for a GP who hasn't received training and B 12 deficiency to pinpoint that that might be the problem.

Steven Bruce

But surely, tongue firmly in cheek, all doctors have had training in Vitamin B 12 deficiency, because that would be part of their normal medical education. Sure, we'd

Tracey Witty

hope so. But unfortunately, I think, on average, they receive about two hours of nutrition training. And that might be just pernicious anaemia. And if you happen to be on that day, then probably received zero training, but actually,

Steven Bruce

in two hours of nutrition training B 12 isn't going to be the major component of that could be all sorts of other things. And I do remember, and I know, you know, I don't want to put down doctors are political, their skills, because I mean, they are, they have to learn an amazing amount of stuff, they have to remember an amazing amount of stuff. But I do remember somebody saying, and it was a doctor saying that the their, their training in nutrition across the board was, was minimal. And because their exams are not primarily in nutrition, they're in how to cut limbs out of bodies and things like that, then it's not what they concentrate on. So some defence of the poor old GP,

Tracey Witty

they've done or been done a huge disservice by not being taught the foundations of human health by giving an architect to their training and then not teaching them about foundations. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, we've, we've got a question already from Vlad based on his own experience, but also relates to what you said on the outset. And he says, Is it true that proper B 12 deficiency, we probably need to understand what proper B 12 deficiency as opposed to any other sort of B 12 deficiency needs to be treated with an injection and that tablets won't make enough of a difference? As a little anecdote, he was visiting Moldova, he's currently of origin and popped into a pharmacy pharmacy to buy b 12,

the pharmacy pharmacy, the pharmacist handed me some ampules and asked whether I had my own syringe at home.

Tracey Witty

That's good and proper B 12 deficiency. So what we're referring to there is B 12 deficiency of which is not due to dietary lack, which is not due to something that can be curable. So H. Pylori, for example, caught early enough that means you can absorb B 12 from food. But if you can't absorb from food, I'll be tough on food and it must be treated by injection. There's the swiftest, the most effective and the cheapest way of treating B 12 deficiency. So that's really great to hear that mulled over does it correctly,

Steven Bruce

bigger for bone from older? So one's first response, or do we eat lots of cabbage or something to make sure it's not just a food deficiency?

Tracey Witty

That's right. And that's the other problem that a lot of our GPs and I know even. What's his name? Matt Hancock when he was Health Secretary suggested that broccoli was the best thing for cognitive decline, and it contains a lot of B 12. And of course, no plant food really contains B 12. It needs to be from meat.

Steven Bruce

Pick you up here, Tracy because anybody who takes any form of advice, especially medical advice from Matt Hancock seriously needs to be looked at.

Tracey Witty

Seriously. I don't take any advice from him. And I don't care how

Steven Bruce

often how widely I'm quoted them saying. Yeah, we've had conventional medical personnel on the show different doctors consultants on the show advocating the green leafy diet advocating eating broccoli. And I'm sure there's a lot of value in that, but it's not a B 12 value.

Tracey Witty

No, no. There are some supplements. I think spirulina and chlorella say chlorophyll but it's not chlorophyll. Chlorophyll, chlorella, chlorella has a slight bit of B 12 in and there are some seaweeds, which once you take them out of the water, there's B 12. In but once they're dried in, it's an analogue. So it's not something the body recognises or can use. And the same, you know, if you're taking

Steven Bruce

Tatara, just as long as it's fresh out of the water the beach well was useful, or is it still some once it becomes just?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, that's right. Okay. But it's often this particular Japanese seaweed is dried. Yeah, not too helpful.

Steven Bruce

And that that's the analogue by which we mean something which tests will pick up as being beat well, but doesn't can't be used by the body is that going to confuse a lot of the conventional approaches used in UK surgeries?

Tracey Witty

Well, in testing the serum, B 12, test, a test or B 12, circulating the body, so b 12, analogues and activate well. And as much as 80% of that result could be inactive b 12, which the body can't use. So even though the serum B test is used commonly, it's known to have limitations. And there are lots of documents on the site, for example, which help a doctor to understand that they should not ignore within your site, my site, your site info.com B 12 info.com. We will make sure everyone gets that. That's right, there's a page what to do next. And on point four of that page, there are lots of documents there, which clearly state that patients should not be ignored if there are clinical signs and symptoms, but they are within range,

Steven Bruce

right? It's asking a lot to get someone to list all these clinical signs and symptoms off the top of their head. I suspect you can probably do it but you have got cameras on you at the moment. Is it a fairly because because we should note this as well. If someone comes in presents to me, I'm sure there are things which I might spot whether they're within my remit or not. And I need to be able to consider whether it could be beatable related so what are those signs and symptoms?

Tracey Witty

There are so many and what's

Steven Bruce

on the SysVol share with basically

Tracey Witty

but no there are so many and it affects every body system. So from top to toe, you might have premature greying you may have tinnitus, you may have tremor may have radiculopathy. So widespread pain, gastrointestinal problems, blurred vision, bowel or bladder incontinence, numbness and tingling in the extremities. But it affects every single body system. But the best way really in a way to say how it manifests is to talk about misdiagnosis. So common misdiagnosed, the B 12. Deficiency might be things like Parkinson's, congestive heart failure, psychosis, bipolar, schizophrenia. Anything me Barbara milder chronic fatigue syndrome. So looking at the misdiagnosis page gives you an idea of what kind of symptoms might be manifesting with.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and I really think that's quite important because I can't speak for all other practitioners. But I certainly I know that people come to me and the people in my clinic, because basically, there's been nothing offered to them by their GP. And I'm not going to speculate on the reasons for that, but they're not been offered anything in there can be like conventional surgery, so they come to us looking for help. And it's very, very useful if we can understand what the symptoms what the misdiagnosis might be. So hopefully we can point them in the right direction. I just worry that everyone who comes to us, we're going to say, ah, we've got a test for B 12. And therefore the GP is gonna get really fed up with us and we send everybody to them saying tests will be 12. And I remember last time you talked about which tests were more reliable and which ones were less reliable.

Tracey Witty

Well, there is an activity 12 tests but unfortunately, that's not gold standard either. So usually, the first line is the serum free trial test people will have been offered maybe an intrinsic factor, antibody test or parietal cell antibody test. And then homocysteine which is an amino acid which rises to toxic levels when you're low in B 12, B six and B nine. And the beauty of that test is that that level takes quite a while to come down but of course it has to be done in a hospital setting because the blood has to be spun quickly or placed into gel. So unfortunately trying to get testing for B 12 deficiency can be tricky too.

Steven Bruce

So the easiest test is to take it and see what happens take B 12 and see what happens provide a you can take it

Tracey Witty

you know if you are reaching the site, there is a page for testing there's a page for causes. So if any of those strike For the people in the symptoms, there's plenty of symptoms there that you are taking off. And, you know, you can have a kind of, you might find that you're barking up the right tree. And of course, there might be differential diagnosis. But if the doctor is worried about that, and they there's a fairly sure sign that the person has been 12 deficient, then giving a treatment giving a trial of B 12. Injections can't do any harm and may actually confirm the diagnosis.

Steven Bruce

So the short answer is moved to Moldova, where you can get some pharmacy and get this stuff. Vlad has another question. Actually, it was on the topic of food sources of beasts. Well, he wants to know if local, he says British lambs liver is a good source of Beto.

Tracey Witty

I think liver if you can absorb beautiful food, then liver is a good source. Certainly. Steaks,

Steven Bruce

right? And that would be a good source of active B 12. Not simply a,

Tracey Witty

I mean, if we can absorb, you know, throughout the customers are working well and we eat animal products, then we're able to unbind that B 12. From food. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

Okay. I've been asked by Stephen, I think what the evidence is for the use of sublingual, B 12, supplements.

Tracey Witty

Somebody people say they do, okay, on sublingual, and it's usually in the form of methyl cobalamin. But what we're never sure of really is the quality of the particular tablets. It's handy because it avoids the stomach and it is absorbed through the mucosa. But methyl cobalamin doesn't suit everybody. But if people are finding that they use those and they are, you know, this, their symptoms are improving, then then great. It doesn't do anything for me particularly. But some

people find that they do help between injections. But if you are, you know, really truly there's nothing essentially that beats the injections for

Steven Bruce

could I go to a pharmacy and get tablets, sublingual tablets, over the counter. Yeah. Right. So is there a danger then that I as an osteopath say to my patient when considerably 12 I think you should do something about that. They go to the pharmacy, they get the sublinguals nothing changes, and therefore they can't be B 12. Well, that's it.

Tracey Witty

And I think the problem is that when people hear about B 12, or they read about B 12, the first thing they might do is go out and buy a supplement, whether that's a swallowed supplement, or a sublingual, and unfortunately, the best route first of all, before taking any supplements at all is going and getting tested if you want a diagnosis by the doctor, because getting that baseline before we supplement is really key. If you take a sublingual, or even a tiny 50 Mark from Sonic Parliament tablet that could skew your results for some weeks or even months. And then therefore, it can either lead the patient or the doctor to back up another tray when actually it really is B 12 deficiency. It's just that that result has been skewed.

Steven Bruce

I think it's nice to put some some colour into these descriptions that you've given you said misdiagnosis of Parkinson's and you said psychosis. You were going to bring someone with you this evening to join us in the studio. But apparently she's ill. So she couldn't get here. But we have got somebody waiting in the wings to join us virtually Karen, haven't we? And I think it might be an idea to listen to Karen's story about B 12. Do you think yes, definitely. So if we can if we can bring Karen in now. Karen Good evening. Again. Nice. Hopefully the technology is working well. To introduce me you are a mental health nurse. At one point you worked out in New Zealand in Auckland, didn't you? I did. So you have seen be 12 I imagine in your capacity as a beat well as a mental health nurse as a professional. But tell us your story from a personal perspective.

Karen Smith

As you already mentioned, I was working out in Auckland at the Centre for brain research, coordinating a dementia prevention research clinic. So one of the things that we test for during that process is v 12. to rule out any potential for that being a cause behind people's cognitive deficits. And during that time, I started to develop some problems myself. Initially, it started with a tremor in my hands for circulation in my left wrist. I then had a fall where my my leg gave way. I started experiencing non epileptic seizures, whereby my whole body would shudder and I'd go icy cold. It almost felt like my whole body was shutting down. It was really quite scary. I had blurred vision tinnitus eventually started making mistakes at work because I was losing the ability to concentrate. So I went to see my GP who he clearly expressed concern, and referred me to neurology, who immediately declined the referral even though my B 12 levels were at 198 at that point, or should they be connection wasn't? What should go over 200? At the very least anyway, for Well, at the moment in Britain, it's 220. Previously, it has been lower than that for adults, but currently, it's 220. So I was already falling under the threat under the threshold. And consequently, my referral was declined by neurology who felt that there was no evidence that had anything neurological wrong with me. And one of my colleagues who wished to stress didn't mean this detrimentally, but felt that the nature of my work meant that perhaps I seem too much in the way of these kinds of symptoms. And perhaps they were, I was just a bit stressed. And you know, they're all in my mind a little bit. So I



started to become more and more unwell, eventually returned back home to the UK, because I just felt really strange mentally as well. I started to experience feelings of depersonalization, and eventually psychosis. So six months after I returned home, I became more and more psychotic, went to see a GP. GP was concerned and rightly said, Look, just take some time off work. But if you feel that things get worse, do call back.

Steven Bruce

When you say psychotic, what do you mean? What will you do?

Karen Smith

I started to think that I was being followed by the FBI that my phone had been intercepted. My computer had been intercepted. I started having thoughts that that I was abusing children. Really bizarre thoughts. My colleagues at that time I was working for a community mental health team. They wrongly suspected me of having used illicit substances. So one particular evening after seeing the GP in the morning, I became even more psychotic to the point where my landlady became very concerned about my welfare. She contacted 111, who advised me to contact my GP. GP wasn't interested, they instantly dismissed me saying that you've already spoken to a GP this morning.

Steven Bruce

Sorry, I keep interrupting you. But

Karen Smith

this was back in 2017. Not that long ago. No. So consequently, after my landlord spoke to someone from 111, they advised me to take myself off to a&e as soon as possible. But of course, by that time, I was really psychotic. As I was driving towards the hospital, I was convinced that the lights in the background, the car lights work with the FBI. And I was about to be taken in and got all kinds of thoughts were going through my head, I felt it was some kind of government conspiracy. So I didn't actually get to the hospital. I pulled in a pub and tried to seek help from the bar staff. And they called the police who took me under a 1362 to a 136 mental health suite,

Steven Bruce

where what is your one through six?

Karen Smith

This is where people are taken when they're detained by the police. And they're taken for urgent assessment of their mental health.

Steven Bruce

Is that what we would call sectioning? Yeah,

Karen Smith

yeah, but I wasn't asked to stay under section they did agree to admit me informally. But during the time that I was in hospital, I was taunted by staff who accused me of faking my symptoms. They didn't take seriously any of the remarks that I made. For instance, I complained about my taste buds being very strange, or food tasted very, very weird. So I didn't want to eat. Again, they were very dismissive of that they made no connection. They took bloods while I was in there, and my b 12. levels were 44. And they took an intrinsic factor test, which concluded I had pernicious anaemia. However, they didn't share those results with me. So I was discharged with a suspected diagnosis of



bipolar disorder. At that point, I was moving to a different area. So I was taken under in the care of a community mental health team in another area, as far as I know, those results were weren't shared with them either. So I spent a year prescribed antipsychotics and antidepressants, which didn't make me feel any better at all. I was beginning to lose more feeling in my in my leg, starting to get quite a lot of weakness and almost dragging my leg along, more seizures, more for circulations. Still paranoid. But I was trying to hold down a job as a mental health nurse on a very busy ward. So I tried to suppress a lot of the thoughts that I was having. But I'd be walking along the street, every time I'd see somebody on a mobile phone, I felt that it was people following me and telling other people where I was going. And I just remember speaking to my community mental health nurse and the psychologist about how I felt and how I felt when I was admitted to to a mental health Ward, and how unhappy I was about my care there. And spoke about making a formal complaint. I was discouraged from doing that. But I ignored the advice and made the complaint anyway. And that's when I received a full copy of my of my nursing notes, which included the blood results. And that's when I connected with Tracy, because, you know, it was just such a relief in many ways to learn that, actually, I didn't have a mental disorder. And, in fact, all of these symptoms could be explained by B 12 deficiency. And Tracy managed to advocate for me with my very dismissive GP, who, even though I'd shown them the blood results, were still insisting that I didn't have anything wrong with me that it was a mental health problem. And we're denying the treatment, even though the blood results form not only gave the diagnosis, it actually said, this patient needs urgent treatment with B 12. And we'll need it for life. But the GP wasn't willing to accept that. And in fact, when I talked about the symptoms of B 12 deficiency with them, their response was, yeah, you've just been on Google, haven't you and come across the symptoms and decided you have them all, even though my records from New Zealand clearly indicated that I've been having these symptoms for some time.

Steven Bruce

Gosh, do you have anything to say in defence of those medical staff who dismissed this as they are their reasons for not believing you that you can imagine?

Karen Smith

In terms of my colleagues out in New Zealand, because bear in mind, some of the neurology team were my colleagues. And one of them did actually say that she felt it was probably just stress. I certainly don't think it was anything personal. I think it was probably I don't want to use the word ignorance, but I can't think of a better word really. Whether it's their lack of understanding, I don't know. I can understand in some ways why they would think maybe it was in my head because I had worked so closely with people with neurological disorders. But by the same token, colleagues had actually seen the tremors in my hands and the for simulations in my arm. So I'm really not quite sure why they were so dismissive. In terms of the GP, when I got back to the UK, I can only think it is lack of education. Lack of information. Yeah, and strangely enough, even now, as a mental health nurse, I've recently worked in a memory clinic where again, one of the things we roll out initially with our patients who were suspected of having dementia is B 12. deficiency. So many of my colleagues have absolutely no idea that B 12 deficiency can cause psychosis. Even the mental health team who were treating me again, we're very, very dismissive. And we're quick to say, or we've never heard of psychosis in vitro of deficiency. Are you sure about that? And I've had battles with consultant psychiatrist on the wards that I've worked on again, they don't think it's that there's a connection there. So clearly, that there's a lack of education as Tracy's already pointed. stood out during medical training.

Steven Bruce

Karen, it's a hell of a story that you've just told. And I thank you very much for coming on the show when I'm finished with you yet, but I just want to say that I've been told that people watching this show are absolutely incredulous that you could have been treated this way. And you aren't unique. That's the thing. And I'm just I'm just wondering, you know, as a mental health nurse, you say you're testing people for memory loss and so on. Have you seen other people who've gone through the same sort of distressing situation as yourself as a result of beat? Well, they

Karen Smith

still are, yeah, GPs are very hit and miss. I've worked with some GPs and made recommendations after assessing my patients in the memory clinic and they've been brilliant straightaway. They've said, Right, okay, we know what to do. We'll put this patient on B 12, injections, others. I've even seen patients notes, computerised notes were in very clearly in capital letters at the top says do not give this patient B 12 injections, ensure their advice to seek treatment via tablets over the counter.

Steven Bruce

Would you say that?

Karen Smith

No idea. I've challenged them and just get responses back saying we are not changing our stance on this. And this is even where patients have been on injections for six 810 years.

Steven Bruce

Gosh, yeah. I've also been said, people have said that, you know, you're very brave to come and talk about this. And and I guess you are because you're talking about your health. But one thing I will say is that it's very difficult, I think for people to talk about mental health because mental health is a is a seems in some ways more personal than other things. But this is not mental health. This is a vitamin deficiency. And in some ways that makes it I hope, not just for you, but for other patients something that it will be easier to discuss.

Karen Smith

like to think so. It was it was a real shock for me as a practising mental health nurse to to be taken in by police with a psychosis. But strangely enough, even though I was given a diagnosis of late onset Bipolar Disorder, I never ever believed that that was the case. I can't explain why I've thought that. But and it makes me question now when I see patients in my line of work, who are given diagnoses of late onset Bipolar disorder, and I just wonder whether it really is

Steven Bruce

yes, yeah. Do you have do you know, does anyone know why at this particular stage in your life, you should suddenly have become b 12. deficient?

Karen Smith

From from what I've, I've been told by people who are very experienced in this area. They've said I've most likely had it for a long, long time, but I just haven't realised it and I must be honest, I'm someone who doesn't seek medical attention readily. I'll just try and battle on. So things, the earliest symptoms that I had such as tinnitus, I just thought, Okay, fair enough. You know, it's common. I'd had iron deficiency before. So I put a lot of it down to that. I have hypothyroidism. So I put a lot of symptoms down to that, especially when I'd have the, the sort of non epileptic seizures where I go

icy cold. I just thought that, you know, perhaps it was my thyroid levels been low. And, again, you know, I've had quite a history of depression, which I just thought was something that, you know, I was one of those people that tended to get that didn't make any connection. It was always something I managed. gynaecological problems again, potentially, there's a connection there, but no one had ever suggested that it could be anything else. So, yeah, it's interesting, really, it's probably been there for many years, but masked or disguised by other conditions.

Steven Bruce

Yes. And since you've been getting a sensible, B 12 supplement, have all those things completely disappeared.

Karen Smith

Not entirely. No. I still get a lot of paraesthesia that's pins and needles in my hands and feet. Still get some tinnitus. One of the things that I do struggle with at the moment is fatigue. I had over Come that really well with regular v 12. But then, in January 2020, I contracted COVID-19. And it seemed to undo a lot of the good work that had been done with the, with the B 12. injections. Even though I tend to cope better than most, it has left me with some ongoing. I say fatigue, I guess it is fatigue. I was always someone that could work long hours and has worked long hours and, you know, just coped with it. But now I find myself getting to the middle of the week and really feeling like I need a day off.

Steven Bruce

Right. Okay. But that said, the beach Well, supplementation did improve things massively. I can, I guess. Yeah.

Karen Smith

Yeah. And certainly, in terms of the mental health problems, the psychosis I've never had another episode is that since

Steven Bruce

right, and the FBI have they stopped following you know.

Karen Smith

But it's strange, because I was in England, and I've no idea why it would be the FBI anyway. I used to watch a lot of crime dramas, which tended to be American.

Steven Bruce

Karen, thank you so much, it was really kind of you to join us there. And we'll, we'll switch you off our monitor here. So you can, please feel free to stay and stay with us for the rest of the show. And if there's more that you want to join in with, and you'd be more than welcome to come in again, on the on the video link. But I'll switch back to the Tracy here and give you a little bit of a break. Thank you again. Thank you. So Karen comes to you comes to you, because she's obviously got a familiarity with B 12. What did you do what changes things because she's, she's knowledgeable, she couldn't get the right treatment.

Tracey Witty

And I think what happens when a third party gets involved, people will start to listen a bit more. And I think having a site knowing that it's trusted, some GPs really do respond. And they've got journals there in one place. And there are case studies. And actually, I do write to doctors, for people, I

Steven Bruce

review your way I say for you to help as well. And that things turned out well for them. Sorry, I pushed a few pages. So you could help them get the right treatment.

Tracey Witty

And it's you know, some doctors are very receptive to the information because they thank people for sending them to the site and, you know, thanking them for that gap in their knowledge. And others will, you know, just be stuck with deciding that they're, it's their way or the highway, there was a lovely lady who contacted me who had been to the GP 17 times 17 times

Steven Bruce

to get fed up with you, I imagine quite apart.

Tracey Witty

And she was low in B 12. But every time she went they only offered antidepressants. And when I spoke to this doctor, he said that you're very focused on B 12. And I said, Well, yes, she's low in B 12. And he said, you know, haughtily that they wanted to treat her holistically. So I asked how that was going to be done. He said it was none of my business. So unfortunately, you know, some people will not take any information, new information on and will be just deciding, they're gonna do what they're gonna do. And that's it. So, you know, if they've not been educated at it during medical training, and then they refuse to be educated after that, then that's just a travesty.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. And again, I don't want to defend bad care for patients, but I'm thinking of the poor GP with a mountain of paperwork at the end of the day, 10 minutes to see each patient, when really, many of them will admit effectively, they're screening out life threatening diseases and then giving you ibuprofen.

Tracey Witty

I think, you know, I did speak to a lovely doctor in Ireland who said, you know, what should I do? And I said, Well, if you give this lady B 12, injections, she'll leave you alone. And he said, No. So we know that one worked, use different tactics with HTP.

Steven Bruce

Is there a I'm gonna I've got loads and loads of questions in here from people because as we predicted, this is a very popular subject, I think partly because people are so astonished at the symptoms that come with B 12 deficiency in the way people can be mishandled. But before we go on to those Is there is there a hierarchy of symptoms in this do they always come in a particular order are some more prevalent than others are more severe than others? We heard Karen talking about paraesthesia in the hands in the in the legs. Could that be the only symptom or

Tracey Witty

some people may have you know, handful of symptoms and paraesthesia eight exit gate, paler anaemia, certain classic symptoms of pernicious anaemia may be what the doctor recognises. But if

my current you're presenting with mental health symptoms, as long side, other symptoms that are physical, they often will push that patient down the mental health route, unfortunately. And it's really hard to kind of shake that tag off. And the patient can be pigeonholed. So for most people, oftentimes should I say, fatigue is a major symptom, brain fog or depression.

Steven Bruce

And that brain fog, perhaps can be put down to all sorts of things, including long COVID, or drug treatment.

Tracey Witty

You know, oftentimes, patients are kind of pushed away by saying, Oh, it's because you're a young mum, oh, it's because you've got teenage children. It's because you're going through the menopause. It's because you've got elderly parents, it's because you've got a stressful job. And oftentimes, parents, sorry, patients aren't listened to, and are dismissed. Because the doctor sees it as something at their time of life. Instead of it actually being a physical lack of a vitamin,

Steven Bruce

or is it a possible cause of what could be diagnosed as postnatal depression?

Tracey Witty

Absolutely. So the nitrous oxide that's used during labour, if you have an undiagnosed mum, who's given gas and air, then that completely activates the beat well, so mum may go off and with postnatal depression, if it's not tested for and then the baby, if the baby is breastfed, they're not able to access any B 12. Because mom's b 12, has been totally inactivated by the gas and air. And you see kids obviously using these canisters with nitrous oxide, recreationally, and that's causing serious problems, neurological problems in them, too.

Steven Bruce

Yes. That's, I mean, all of that is so relevant to what we as primary care practitioners do, even though we're unlikely to be the first port of call for someone with a mental health problem perceived to have that sort of bum or depression, ataxia or muscle pains or paraesthesia, things like that, or even just, just general malaise. I mean, people might well come to us for that sort of thing. So it's worth us knowing about this. I'm going to turn to some questions from other people. I've got one here from John. Oh, John. Oh, nice to have you on the on the show listening to the show. Johnny says what's the best source of non injectable patient friendly B 12.

Tracey Witty

Non injectable. If you've got a patient, then who is just needing B 12. Because they're deficient through dark lack, then, you know, hopefully a really good supplement. You know, particular supplement makers of high quality,

Steven Bruce

but who do you recommend? Or you wouldn't worry about naming

Tracey Witty

a company called Health lead, which is a Welsh company. Health Health Leads, I use that as their active B vitamins, I use their B complex and their their folate. I don't use their B 12. Because obviously, I have an injection. You can buy that. And Sol gar is pretty good. Supplement,

Steven Bruce

I'm guessing that maybe John is concerned is that people might be needle phobic might be resistant to injections and therefore won't go down that route.

Tracey Witty

Well, the problem is if they are needle phobic, and they're taking tablets, and the tablets don't work, they just have to not get enough to just try and get over the phobia because that needle saved their lives. stopped the tops the symptoms,

Steven Bruce

you might already have just answered this question is done. So should you backup the B 12. supplementation with a high potency V complex?

Tracey Witty

Well, yeah, all the B vitamins work together and folate is known as the big systems B 12. So if your B 12. deficient, you will often be folate deficient and need to take that as a cofactor to B 12. And the family of eight vitamins A B vitamins, you know all work together. It's not easy to go and get tested for B one, b two and so on. But generally speaking a good B complex taken alongside is really helpful. Right?

Steven Bruce

Okay. Alex has asked an interesting question. This often comes up when we're talking about anything to do with any form of nutrition. Alex wants to know if I met Brazil is a common cause and B 12. B 12. deficiency

Tracey Witty

is anything ending in Zald?

Steven Bruce

Sorry, a proton pump inhibitors. Yeah.

Tracey Witty

PPIs. And any acid depressants really, they're affecting the stomach and they're affecting your ability to absorb eat well. And so it's Metformin, certain antibiotics, leftover for Parkinson's, there's so many drugs that cause a problem with absorption of beta.

Steven Bruce

So what are the what are the other conditions then that we ought to bear in mind if someone comes to us and they've got some other condition being treated by conventional medicine that might make us think Well, we've got to think about how that might also affect your b 12 level.

Tracey Witty

Well, if like Karen said she has a thyroid condition. So thyroid problems, vitiligo, other autoimmune conditions, people collect up those conditions and that's where that might be a red flag for you for pernicious anaemia. So certainly looking for those. And obviously any any of the listed Miss diagnoses might also help you to identify.

Steven Bruce

Mary Lou says, What about vegan and Jovita nutritional yeast flakes?

Tracey Witty

Well, if you're vegan, and you only be told if you're vegan, you can still absorb the B12 from food, but you're avoiding it in any supplement they can take can help. Yes, absolutely. The problem comes when the vegan might also have another cause for B12 deficiency. Say, you know, there may also have pernicious anaemia, methylation issues, they may also be on a drug that stopping the McLogan B12. So it's really key that anybody who is a vegan who finds that they've got B12 deficiency symptoms, but they're taking supplements, that really they need to look at the other causes and any doctor telling a vegan just to eat animal products, that's, you know, that's just offensive to them. Yes. And also, you know, they deserve the best treatment and the swiftest treatment, which is B12 injections. Right?

Steven Bruce

Do I remember a story that a vegan community was discovered that they had good sources are beautiful, because actually, somewhere in their diet, there was some sort of insect component or? No, I got that wrong. Someone will tell me about some of them put me right on that at some point. Robin says, just to clarify, is the inactive B12 denatured? In some way? I think he's going back to the seaweed that you talked about earlier on, when and how does it become inactive? Is there anything we could do to influence or slow the rate of decay?

Tracey Witty

I don't know. Really. I mean, it's very processing the body with beat well. In with the act of veto of circulating and the inactivity to have circulating is beyond me. I don't know the process of that. I know that the seaweed, for example, once it's taken out to see that minute there could be available to you following that, really no, it's really tricky to even the act of B12 test, which is, you know, people tout as is really helpful, actually, that can miss severely deficient people too. And of course, then, if you're really focused on that result and believing that result, but you are B12 deficient, then that just sends you off down another road. Okay.

Steven Bruce

Robbins also said that he might have missed this, I don't think he did. How do we identify that a patient Struggles to Absorb dietary or supplemented B12.

Tracey Witty

I think that the point is, if you've got a patient who's come to you and now manifesting of B12 deficiency, and they eat animal products, then there's your answer, you know, you're not able to absorb and be B12 through the stomach. So therefore, all tablets are not going to really help sublinguals may help for some people, but certainly not all tablets.

Steven Bruce

But I think when we when we first spoke about this, that actually, in some ways, it's a this is a diagnosis, you could throw at virtually anything anybody comes in with, but at the same time, it's quite difficult to work out. Because there are so many possible things that could be affected by B12 Deficiency. And testing is hard to come by and good testings hard to come by. And I suspect that somewhere in these questions, sooner or later, someone's going to say about what about private



testing? Can we send people to private labs? Would that be quicker, more efficient? Or do we need to be careful with them as well?

Tracey Witty

I think it can be, it can be helpful. But it depends where you're where you want your treatment from. A lot of doctors will refuse to accept private testing. And you know, someone's thinking that the blood is somebody else's, or, you know, it's not their lap. So that can be unhelpful for people. I don't know, I've never used private testing myself. I don't really know, I know, there can be certain. If you can go to a hospital and have your blood taken, I think that's going to be more reliable than these quick tests. But it's really tricky. I think, you know, the past three years has shown us that actually, sometimes getting help from the doctor is not, it's just not available for people. And so they do totally go down the private route, get themselves tested, and then treat themselves from online pharmacy, which has to be a route for lots of people who just aren't getting the help on their GP

Steven Bruce

might not have an answer to this, but I would have thought that if you felt I'm gonna go to a private lab, and I'm gonna get my patient tested there and it comes back and says that they aren't B 12 deficient and you've gone for the right tests, which you've told us all about, and they're all on your side. If you present that to a doctor, and they say what I'm not relying on that you say, Well, okay, but here's good evidence that we've reason to believe send them for your own test you can have that will be negligent not to do that.

Tracey Witty

That's right. And I think, you know, we all have a right really to try and discover what it is. And I think, personally, I think many of the heart sink patients in GP practices, if we tested them for nutritional deficiencies, not just be 12, but the others, there may be where the answers lie.

Steven Bruce

What sort of age is this commonly present? Is it mainly a problem for older people, you said that the NHS guidelines will consider considering new people over 16? Or is it a problem amongst younger? Well, children, as we've

Tracey Witty

discussed, you know, if you have a mum who's unknowingly deficient, and then takes nitrous oxide, and that baby is also B 12. deficient, you can have in vitro problems with babies, children of parents with B 12. deficiency can manifest with symptoms from any age, the most common and certainly the nice guidance, this focusing on over 65. And I think that lots of GPS really don't consider it in men, because they think it is a woman over 60 That might be affected by B 12 deficiency traditionally, and I was in my early 40s, when I was found to be the trial deficient so. And by that time, I'd done an awful lot of research. So I was able to go armed with information. But many people it doesn't even on the radar of the GP, if you are not a woman over 60,

Steven Bruce

right? Well, David's asked whether this affects more men and women,

Tracey Witty

it does affect more women than men and probably due to pregnancy. And probably like with the you know, the the autoimmune side, but men certainly do suffer from B to C to.

Steven Bruce

And I'm not sure I actually got an answer to the question of what age does it present is equal all ages, where you've had it from, from childhood

Tracey Witty

depends on the course if you if you you're not deficient, because you've been taking metformin and you only started on Metformin, when you were in your 40s, then you're going to see that or, you know, a lot of the drug causes will be whatever age they started that and then a couple of years later, so it can be any age, any stage of life term, really,

Steven Bruce

I don't want to get anybody off on their hobbyhorse about this. But of course, one of the most commonly prescribed prescribed drugs is one form of statin or another Do they have any connection with meeting or deficiency? No,

Tracey Witty

not that I know not that I've seen good news. At last. I'm not sure.

Steven Bruce

Okay, that's fine. zoic says if you take B 12 supplements, can you take too much? Or will the body get rid of what he doesn't use?

Tracey Witty

The body is supposed to excrete, because it's water soluble, the body's supposed to excrete what it doesn't need over the next 24 hours. But I suppose there's anything really you know, you need to if you're taking oral supplements anyway, read what it says on the bottle and just follow that advice.

Steven Bruce

When you say that, but an awful lot of vitamin supplements, the recommended doses are way below what has been shown to be effective. Yeah. Obviously, you're the expert on B 12. So please.

Tracey Witty

So I think I mean, the problem is for, say, prenatal vitamins that women taking the Beethoven there is tiny, it's just a minuscule amount. But if you're buying a specific B 12 supplement, which might be 1000 micrograms, or you know, 2000 5000, then you know really looking at that advice. I think if you take in, you know multivitamins in that it might be a tiny amount.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Is there a standard international dose of Beto for in tablet form? Well, whatever form Well, is there a recommended supplementation?

Tracey Witty

Well, I like a B 12. One fuel with one mill B 12. In and that I have weekly that suits me fine. Other people need that every other day. In a tablet form. They say that 1000 micrograms, you might accept a little bypass.

Steven Bruce

Graham isn't what Yeah,

Tracey Witty

I suppose. Yeah. Yeah. So you know that that was what was being touted in in the lockdown. You know that 1000 micrograms or one gramme would be an m by passive diffusion. But of course, if you can't, you know, if we're taking one of those tablets every day and just getting a tiny percentage, why not have an injection and know that you're getting what you need? And what form of the injections, I use hydroxocobalamin and that mine is prescribed to me by the, somebody I use because subcutaneous because I self inject. They are actually only licenced on the NHS for intramuscular. Goodness knows why really. Most people who take their treatment in their own hands do subcutaneous because less Chances kind of interfering with any nerves or anything.

Steven Bruce

Pip says Can newborns suffer from Beto deficiencies then and how might they present? symptomatically? Obviously, you've answered that by saying yes, they can.

Tracey Witty

They can, I suppose, really, you're noticing things like failure to thrive, and floppiness and there are a lot of red flags and signs and symptoms on the children's page. So I think the point is that the mums know the child, if there is symptoms, that inner child has changed or is different to how they used to be, then they're acutely aware of this, this change in their baby. There are on the film's page of the site, there is a brilliant documentary done by Alyssa Leonard, which you can picture picture Sally patch lock, and there is a two, there's a feature of the two year old in there. And Historie Yes, so it's useful to look at those and there was a lovely lady who contacted me whose child was B 12. deficient, it took 364 days for the health care profession to find that this poor baby was between off deficient and all that time, the parents of course have no lasting damage as a result of that it can be because the thing is that the children their nervous systems are developing. And it doesn't necessarily mean that you can reverse out of or symptoms hopefully with adults with the right level of B 12. the right frequency of B 12. You can reverse that of all symptoms. And my mum who was treated daughter be treated when she was 74. She said at like I do I have never felt this well in all my life. You know, so it, you can reverse them. With children. It's really tricky.

Steven Bruce

You mentioned Sally Sally portulaca moment ago and we probably ought to just explain Sally is an American was was always an American nurse wrote a book called could it be be 12 but also, and I think this is quite useful. She was the brains or the driving force behind a film called

Tracey Witty

our she Alyssa Leonard approached Sally and wanted to make a film of her life.

Steven Bruce

What's the film called Sally? Sally, people should look it's a very watchable film because it's basically is presented as a drama. But the drama is real. It's not far from reality as I understand it, but it's all about Sally who was beautiful deficient having to convince the medical world in America that she was right. And it's it really is worth a look. And you'll get it on Amazon and anyone Apple or places like

Tracey Witty

yeah, there's a link to that on the site too. And I think the saddest thing for me about that is that obviously wants to be kind of Hollywood, and they have a handsome male doctor who discovers Sally's deficiency that actually was when she was a paramedic, and she discovered her own deficiency. And I'd have loved it if they'd really champion that. So she started out as a nurse and then became a nurse. She started as a part of the paramedic and then became a nurse.

Steven Bruce

I see. Yeah, but I mean, it's a hugely watchable film. It is genuine Friday night entertainment, but at the same time, you learn quite a lot about B12 deficiency from it. Right So Allison says kind of trauma such as bone fracture or concussion, general anaesthetic, make B12. plummet boom, boom fracture concussion, or general anaesthesia? Could they effectively B12

Tracey Witty

traumas and stress, you know, if you are B12 deficient that can you know, certainly, you know, be have an impact on your levels. I think if you are stressed or ill, then it's always an idea to bump up your frequency of beat well, right? But not necessarily. That's going to create your beat up.

Steven Bruce

Excuse me with the coughing. I mean, you and I both got a similar sort of legacy legacy of a cold or something in the moment that you're doing right means that you are the one who is worried about profit. Atlas have a case to discuss. Bev says I have a patient female 25 years old with burning pain down the anterior thighs bilaterally. worse when climbing the stairs, she's fatigued suffers lightheadedness, especially when standing from sitting episodes of weakness. She's had a history of anaemia a few years previously. Bev says she recommended a private blood test for anaemia her folate was low but also vitamin B12 was described as 35 Blah, blah, moles per litre, he can pick them all pick what is that? That sounds like? Well, perhaps is it possible that the B12 could be causing the pain in her legs? She has been referred to her GP.

Tracey Witty

It could Yeah. People have all sorts of pains. The standing but the lightheadedness from sitting to standing can also be B12 deficiency as that postural orthostatic hypotension. So that is a symptom of B12 deficiency, right? Okay. And people are amazed oftentimes even if The list that's on the site is not exhaustive, but they are the most commonly presented. But people still are astounded that certain things have gone that they didn't even realise were related.

Steven Bruce

When you keep talking about the site and the pages, give us a web address, again, B12 info.com.

Tracey Witty

B12 info.com.

Steven Bruce

We will post it and we'll send it out to people afterwards. But you know, just wanna make sure that they know when you talk about the the pages in the in the site, what we're referring to, Valerie says, Can being beat well deficient cause atrial fibrillation? Well, let's talk about cardiovascular issues in between. Yeah,

Tracey Witty

definitely related to cardio cardiovascular issues. You'll see again, on the site that there are, there's a whole section on that. So people who have had strokes TAs and myocardial infarction, then it's really worth testing B 12 deficiency for beetwen deficiency, but it's an homocysteine as well, because that's a really good test for cardiovascular health. And my own father died when he was 37. And I was only five after three heart attacks, looking as fit as a butcher's dog, and, you know, on otherwise looking really well. And when I started looking into B 12 deficiency, I had an inkling that this was a genetic thing, not pernicious anaemia methylation issues, and badgered my mom to do her genetic testing and methylation profile, and found that both Dad and I had inherited from both mum and dad sat methylation.

Steven Bruce  
snips, which brings me what's meant by methylation.

Tracey Witty  
methylation is something that happens in the body plenty of times, and it can, if there's a problem with B, 12, and folate, so then you can have, it can lead to all sorts of conditions. And once I found that dad had that, and both Dad and I also share a clotting disorder called factor five Leiden, that means you're at you're an increased risk of cardiovascular events. So but the methylation side of things is quite complex, there are links on the very useful links page, to have more of that. For people who are perhaps diagnosed with things like fibromyalgia, ADHD, autism, then looking towards methylation might give people a clue as to what's happening.

Steven Bruce  
Once again, I'm just gonna say it again. There's so many things that you're telling us could be attributed to beat? Well, it's almost that everyone should have the test regularly. Matt Blaney says I recently took chlorella because I was suffering from fatigue. I then had a blood test, which showed I had high B 12 levels. Is that a problem?

Tracey Witty  
Oh, chlorella, high B 12. levels if you've been supplementing? No, it's not a problem. It's only a problem. If you've never supplemented with B 12. And you've got ridiculously high levels like in the 1000s. And unfortunately, of the things that doctors do learn, they learn that high B 12 level can be dangerous. But of course, they forget the bit that if you've not supplemented a high B 12 level can be an indication of underlying pathology. So if you've been supplementing, then it can be high, it doesn't mean that that B 12 is actually healing or helping necessarily, unless the symptoms have abated, but takes us back to the limitations of the 10

Steven Bruce  
I don't remember anything about chlorella. What is chlorella?

Tracey Witty  
It's a green thing. I think that spirulina something that vegans take and it is and it has, and I think chlorella has more that you know, has a better a better yes, uptake.

Steven Bruce  
This is great. This is this is great for sure what he does the quizzes for these things, because if you watch the recording of this in order to show that you have watched the thing and playing, we have

to ask them questions, and one of the questions will be what is chlorella? Green thing that will be the correct

Tracey Witty

again, I did work with the Vegan Society on the vegan vegetarian page. So there's information on that.

Steven Bruce

Okay, good. Valerie says Can Valerie was when asked about atrial fibrillation didn't specifically mention atrial fibrillation in your

Tracey Witty

is listed. And I think you know because it is so it you know, strokes. Potts, all of these things. If you've got atrial fibrillation, you're not just going to just have that. I'm not saying that. If you've just got you know, you've got that one symptom then you'll be 12 deficient. If you've got layer upon layer of those symptoms, then it's certainly worth getting beat 12 checked.

Steven Bruce

Right? Is just general tacky cardio on the list. Tech cardio is on the list. Good. I'm not gonna go into one That's good. But it's interesting to note, two questions here about how long it takes to see an improvement. zoic says How long does it take to see an improvement? Once you start taking b 12, supplements or injection, we've learned says How come when the NHS is administering Bito injections, they say it should take six weeks to take effect. Shouldn't it be almost instant?

Tracey Witty

Well, for some people, it is really instant, some people can have one injection and just felt absolutely amazing. And I know with my own loading dose, those first two weeks, I couldn't believe that my blood vision went that my bowel and bladder started working properly. And that so many of my symptoms in that first two weeks were just like, gone. For me, the memory side of things was tricky. And anxiety took a lot longer. Some people, it depends, of course on how long you've been deficient for. Because it takes a long time sometimes for those symptoms to manifest. And I think in all of these things, we are all individual and every one of us is going to have a different time. But the two weeks of the injections, that's the loading dose is given on the NHS. Oftentimes people do great in that first two weeks, and that's when the doctor the GP waving goodbye, said, I'll see you in three months for your next one.

Steven Bruce

Somebody earlier on did send something in about the dosing they were on. And I can't see that at the moment. But I think they talked about that loading dose, which was six a week or

Tracey Witty

so. So it's six injections over two weeks or two weeks, if they can get you in in that same time, some parameters. And then and then if you are neurologically affected, which most people are, and that frequency should continue until those symptoms stop improving. But what generally happens is that the doctor doesn't necessarily know on it. And usually the injections are given by nurses. They give you the two weeks and then they'll say they'll see you in three months, which of course, that four times a year keeps lots of people mentally ill and bed bound.

Steven Bruce

So after six or six injections in two weeks for as long as it takes what is the maintenance dose after that?

Tracey Witty

Well, the maintenance dose at the Meerut minute if you look at the CTS summarise this to every two to three months for neurological symptoms, and some people are stuck on that. And I my personal health was not tolerating that in any way. So I've been on weekly Beto injection for 11 years, and I've managed to fight to keep that certain times another doctor will come in and try and change that and lower the frequency but I have to fight to hang on to it. So everybody's different. Everybody's you know, their lives are different. You're talking about in a traumas or stresses if you take if you are a drink, or if you're a smoker, then your need to be 12 might be more

Steven Bruce

interesting, isn't it that I know all doctors are very aware of the problem of polypharmacy these days are getting people off medication. Beto is possibly just one of those easy ones to say, Oh, you can now reduce your medication because we don't know any better.

Tracey Witty

Exactly. And you'll get people you know, the pharmacists saying, Oh, we're just gonna do a review of your medication. But actually, it's not a review of the medication. It's the review of the B 12. And that's the one they want to stop that leave people on the others. And when you can come off say I know one person who came off 11 drugs when she was on BT Well,

Steven Bruce

gosh, I didn't want to ask Karen about this when she was on it. But Annabelle has raised the question. What kind of gynaecological problems do you get with B 12 deficiency,

Tracey Witty

you can have abnormal pap smears. I personally had early miscarriages. You can have very heavy periods, or even no periods. And, you know, it really does affect every single body system.

Steven Bruce

Right. And what is the for a woman suffering from those experiencing those particular symptoms? What would be the normal course when they go through the conventional healthcare system? If you have if you stop having periods, I don't imagine the first thing they look for is B 12.

Tracey Witty

No, no, it isn't. And I think if you're pregnant, yeah, and you may, you know, be sent off for all sorts of things or given tablets for things. And certainly for heavy periods, people are often prescribed the pill, but actually looking at nutrition always, you know, will give you an answer, I think. And I think the worst thing is that because doctors don't really learn an awful lot about B 12. If you go along with gynaecological problems, then they may then send you to a specialist and that specialist may know nothing about B 12 I'ma

Steven Bruce

interesting. Interestingly, we've had a couple of optimum Guinee consultants on the show and it would have been informative to find out whether they would have considered B 12. Diagnosis



Allison says the FSA website the FSA European food standards, says B 12 has a central role in the normal functions of the brain and nervous system. It's well established from clinical studies that B12 deficiency produces adverse neurological and psychological effects. It's time doctors realise this says Alison, that's not on the show, Alison. Yeah. Well, you are one of the stakeholders, you've told us in formulating the new NHS guidelines. They're nice guidelines. Who were the other stakeholders? And as a stakeholder, do you have a constant role in this? Or do you get a one off chance to say your piece? And that's it.

Tracey Witty

And we have meetings in the beginning where we were split into groups, there were GPs and whoever in there and there are a lot of people who are patient groups, patient support groups, who were stakeholders, and the charities also sent people. My I couldn't be on the committee because I'd have to suspend or work to do with B 12. For two years, which I couldn't possibly do. So due to conflict of interest, yeah, another time, right? No, because of a conflict of interest. So a few weeks ago, we were asked to look at the draft guidelines and make our comments on them. So now we're waiting to see what comes back from that.

Steven Bruce

And the draft guidelines that you looked at without asking you to recite them word for word. Did they look encouraging?

Tracey Witty

To me, I think the the, the fact that it only starts at over six days is really not good at all. They didn't talk an awful lot about the frequency of treatment. And there are problems with the expert advice in pregnancy. So they have a long way to go.

Steven Bruce

Right? Okay. But some guidelines would be a start with me, at least and you can throw those at a GP if you suspect it and say, Look, this is what the guidelines say.

Tracey Witty

To me. Really, the guidelines should say if your patient is B 12. deficient, give them the treatment that they need at the frequency they need. That'd be very short, not 45 pages long.

Steven Bruce

Hamish says functional testing can also be helpful with the confirmation of B 12 deficiency, elevated mean corpuscular volume MCV and elevated our DW. Yep, I'm gonna notice.

Tracey Witty

Sorry. And MCH mean cell haemoglobin, right

Steven Bruce

in a standard blood panel panel can help identify a low active B 12. normal ranges are not optimal ranges as Hamish

Tracey Witty

Yeah, he's right. I missed that completely Hamish so on your full blood count the MCV, MCH and the IDW. So MCV and MCH can be really high if you're low in B, 12, and folate. But the problem is with

that if you've also got a coexisting anaemia, iron anaemia that will bring those values down, so your look okay. And the red cell distribution or receipt gives you the size of the blood cells and macrocytosis. So, there are clues in a full blood count even before the patient goes on to have serum veto tested.

Steven Bruce

Be sure you're not medically trained. I think we've got a few personal experiences here. Sue says my level was 66 when diagnosed. level meaning be 12 by blood volume, I presume she had no symptoms. But she was put on injections and notice that she didn't lose her hair on combing it something she'd done since her teens. The medics were amazed I had no other symptoms had bloodstone as my platelets although they still are even with the injections. Hair loss is that

Tracey Witty

well it can be Yeah, certainly.

Steven Bruce

So all these years yeah, yes. Well,

Tracey Witty

yeah, certainly. Alopecia cat you know, there was a doctor Chandy who treated his patients who had alopecia and their hair came back to. And it's interesting that a doctor who saying you've got no symptoms for her hair was just an incidental thing. But it is amazing to actually get treatment with no symptoms. But brilliant that she did. Yeah, it's 66. I know Karen said that to 20 Above 220 is fine, but actually it's not. The level in Leicestershire at the low reference ranges to 20. I was at 216 When I was diagnosed, but some reference ranges there's one for example in East Lancashire, which is 110. And the person that I helped there, she had said that her doctor had said I won't treat you until you're down to 10. So each different areas of the different assay kit are all calibrated in different way. So I think South Wales has 130 is the low reference range north Wales 150. And I think she's

Steven Bruce

utterly bizarre. I remember you mentioning Is it open the NHS in is different CCGs or whatever have different reference range reference ranges. Yeah.

Tracey Witty

And I think, you know, the point is in that if the patient's symptomatic, they might be at 500 600. And if they've taken supplements, they might get over 1000 But still heavily symptomatic, so you can't rely on The piece of paper you have to look at the patient.

Steven Bruce

S says following Tracy's last talk, I had a young man in his 20s with many problems, including polyneuropathy, blurred vision, memory problems, cognitive decline, loss of appetite. He was at the point of being unable to drive work or eat. After getting B 12 injections very frequently he's walking normally, vision is back appetites back. Cognitive state is much better. But he still needs to get one every month. Yes. Yeah, that's gonna go on forever. Really well,

Tracey Witty

in detail. There's another miraculous way of accessing beat. Well, the injections are the lifesaver.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Yeah. and quality of life saver that I would say, Oh, I hate it when people send in questions like this. Jay, I don't know who you are J. But can you please clarify the difference between cyano cobalamin and hydroxy cobalamin. We only use the hydroxy version, Jay says. So in the 70, there's questions because it means I have to pronounce these probably long words on the fly.

Tracey Witty

So it's the higher leg Ballymun was used here in the 70s on the NHS. And we stopped when we used hydroxocobalamin. So cyano cobalamin has a molecule a science cyanide molecule. And even though that form of B 12. It keeps millions of people alive in Canada and America where that's mainly still used in lots of places on the continent. It shouldn't be used in anybody who has Leber's optic atrophy. Or if they're a heavy smoker, because of that cyanide molecule. hydroxocobalamin is said to stay in the body. For longer, it suits most people. And as I said, that's what a better option. It can be for some people, but I do know people who've gone backwards a step to cyano and find it really helped them. So it really comes down to the fact that we are all individuals and you know, who knows if cyano cobalamin doesn't really help.

Steven Bruce

But the hydroxy is a safer version to start with perhaps.

Tracey Witty

Yes, if you've got to me know the heavy spoken and levers optic atrophy.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Okay. Someone numinous kind cells, as the husband of a friend of mine had severe neurological symptoms, but was dismissed by the GP as the bloods were within range. He had private bloods done showing very low B 12, took it to his GP who didn't want to know he now has to pay privately.

Tracey Witty

And that's common, that's the that's the problem, you know, they can take a horse to

Steven Bruce

this is a whole different subject, a hunger for discussion. And I would never be the person to advocate complaining about a fellow medical professional. But to me, that's the sort of thing that needs to be complained about. Because that means that a person is not getting perfectly reasonable medical care from the NHS, and nobody else is under his or her care. And if it can be shown that that patient going to a private GP or whichever means they've gone isn't as now improve their symptoms, then it makes a nonsense of what the first up there GH, and J. Jason says after the last show with you a patient with Beto deficiency, your symptoms did indicate that he had B 12 deficiency, I showed her your website and her son printed off the guidelines of what the injections should be. She arrived a week later, after seeing the doctor with the information. He simply pushed the paper back to her and said we don't do that. And he refused to discuss it.

Tracey Witty

It's very unfortunately, it's not an isolated case. It's really, it's just, it's beyond nuts.

Steven Bruce

One of the things we did last time, I think is we asked you for a form of words, which was likely to carry more weight with a GP. So if people were writing to a GP, they could they could say this is the case, this is what we found this is the case this is known. If that's if that were the case, I mean, I don't know what what what would your approach be if you went to a doctor and maybe not armed with quite the knowledge that you have got, but the bit they simply said we don't deal with that

Tracey Witty

go? My approach would be? What do you think it is, then? How are you going to treat me and then putting the arguments against that? The point is that if you've got a family history, and you list down your symptoms, or whatever cause it might be you might be on a map Rizal or any of those drugs, or there may be another reason you build your clinical picture for that GP and take it in. And then you know, oftentimes, for me, it's often about finding the human in that GP and saying, you know, what, if I was your daughter, what if I was your son and taking it down that route? Really, because what are they going to offer for the patient's symptoms? If it's not going to be b 12, which is what they need?

Steven Bruce

Is the list of symptoms on your website. B 12 info.com. Is the list of symptoms on your website the same on the clinical knowledge summaries in nice yeah,

Tracey Witty

not necessarily that the signs and symptoms on my website I fall asleep He lots of book and as you know, she has researched this to death really.

Steven Bruce

So again, you are up against an obstacle there because obviously you've got these symptoms from an American book have you as opposed to clinical knowledge summary, which is what we the GPS in the UK are meant to work. I mean, there are an awful

Tracey Witty

lot on there. But it just, I think it's really I think in the situation you've got where a pet where a doctor is refusing to treat, and you know, we come across this, then they say, Oh, we're going to look for other things. And you say, okay, that's fine. Look for other things. While you're doing that, why not treat and the signs and symptoms, as we've said, you know, they can be nonspecific, they can be wide ranging, they can be different in siblings, they can be different in you know, other family members, but just starting somewhere as a real help.

Steven Bruce

Please, Peters obviously been at the Medical thesaurus, because he's coming with another one of these questions, which I love so much. What about methyl cobalamin and add a new ZIL cobalamin, they have different effects in different people, or for different signs and symptoms.

Tracey Witty

I know that Sally said that using methyl cobalamin. Whilst she said in her book, you know, it's a superior one. And lots of people think it's the best form for neurological symptoms. But it's not as stable as hydroxy is an active form. And while I can't remember which the adenosylcobalamin and the methyl cobalamin, one goes to the cytoplasm and the other to the mitochondria, but the step back in hydroxide means you get a conversion to both those two adenosylcobalamin is you can get

that in tablet form. And it's used a lot I think in weightlifting, protein powders, but they're both active forms and some people do really well on them.

Steven Bruce

Why is it in the weightlifting powders unit strength? So it does affect strength as well as I heard

Tracey Witty

and that they give me 12 injections to racehorses. I mean, it just gives it makes you function properly.

Steven Bruce

Okay. Very briefly. Do you know the history of the the Knights missing guest? Is there something we can learn from her?

Tracey Witty

Oh, Claire's case, was similar, in a sense to

Steven Bruce

just to remind people Claire's not here because she's not well, so

Tracey Witty

Claire's case she manifested with seizures. And, of course, with seizures, then, you know, there's obvious route of what you might be diagnosed with for that. And Claire was misdiagnosed with Ms. Sorry, not me. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and functional neurological fnd. And she had seen three neurologist and none of them had B 12 deficiency and Claire's daughter also as aged eight. And when she found that she was be 12. deficient. Don't you know Claire had recognised the symptoms in her daughter. She took it took five years to actually get treatment.

Steven Bruce

So the Claire recognised B 12 deficiency symptoms in herself.

Tracey Witty

He didn't she was actually on a group for chronic fatigue, I think on Facebook and somebody I know who recognised B 12. deficiency and her, she managed to get her into a group where she realised she that B 12 might be a real help to her. And Claire, famously, she had a young daughter at the time she had to have her daughter was looked after by her sister while she was trying to live with her mum. And Claire after the she couldn't drive she can look after so she could barely get dressed. And on her fifth injection, she was able to drive herself to the GP and then eight months later. Absolutely. And you know, managed to reverse all of her symptoms. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

We were talking about something unrelated before we went on here, there's more than a placebo effect involved in that isn't it Sasha has said lb 12 injections expensive. Is that why they're so reluctant to prescribe?

Tracey Witty

No, they're really inexpensive. And I think when we started the campaign to try and make the 12 injections available over the counter, they were 55 pence per ampule. Then they went up to 69

Pence and I think they now charge that probably nine pounds for five in a box. So it's really cheap. I think the problem for the GP is it's not just the actual B 12. It's the time for the nurse to give the injections in the syringe and the needles and that but why not then teach patients self inject so they can do that at home and buy their own equipment if they want to.

Steven Bruce

And I would have thought they would be more more alive to that now than when you first came to see us because since the pandemic there'll be Do you intend to get people doing everything they can at home, or

Tracey Witty

there were some really good doctors during that time that did teach their patients to self inject, and they've stayed on, you know, doing that. And of course, that takes the burden away from the practice. And, you know, like many other countries around the world, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Spain, they are all in Moldova, they're able to self inject at home. And they're trusted to do that.

Steven Bruce

How did you convince the GP let you do it?

Tracey Witty

I'd had IVF, because I couldn't conceive because I was the travel agent. And I said, you know, like, we couldn't get they couldn't get me in for certain times with the loading dose. And I said, you know, can I just do this at home? And they did allow me to

Steven Bruce

let diabetics do it. And they say, yeah, you can, with the normal scope of

Tracey Witty

medical practice. Exactly. I mean, influenza has been used as a murder weapon plus Heparin, but people are sent home with those with no qualms whatsoever. But a vitamin, it's treated as though it is a dangerous narcotic. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

It's been enlightening as it was last time, Tracy and I'm sure there are loads of other questions, which are still formulating in people's minds at the moment. If I get some particularly interesting ones, is it okay for me to pass those on to you, at some point in the future? And again, well, people now know about your website, because we've mentioned it several times. And when we will send out more references to that. So they can get in touch with you. Oh, would you recommend yourself as a good point of contact for people who have concerns about themselves or somebody else who might have beatable deficiency? Are you overwhelmed with people trying to get help from you?

Tracey Witty

No, no, I'll always try and help. Right, I'll always try and help. And I do you know, I've run to develop to courses for patients to learn more about their own condition, because often they'll leave the doctors not knowing anything about it, or they've had to find information for themselves and also for practitioners to so no, I continue to do this work.

Steven Bruce

A lot of people were very grateful for that. Not least Karen, of course, who was on the show earlier on, and I'm sure that you were very helpful with Claire, the lady who couldn't make it this evening. We have so thank you, we've had, I think we had we've had 498 people watching. So a very good number for the show. And I'm not surprised by that at all. So thank you very much for your time. I'm actually I'm very pleased about getting that 498 watching because it means we have tested the login procedures and there was a 15 minute period long before we went live when there were a couple of hiccups. But that was our fault, not the website's fault. What we have proved is that our new system can cope with a large number of people logging in at the same time. So bit of a sense of relief around the team in the in the gallery here this evening. I sense anyway, but you go for this evening. Just like last time we discussed this, I am staggered at the extent of the problem, and still the poor service being given to patients. So let's hope that that changes with the publication of the NICE guidelines next year, which if I remember we will push out to you when they when they eventually emerge.

DRAFT TRANSCRIPT