



Beriberi, White Rice and Vitamin B: A Disease, a Cause, and a Cure

Kenneth J. Carpenter

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Traces the decades of medical & chemical research that solved the puzzle posed by beriberi, a mysterious disease that is caused by the lack of a minute quantity of the chemical thiamin, or vitamin B1, in the diet. Western doctors working in Asia after 1870 saw it as the major disease among those who ate white rice, while people eating brown rice, where the grain still contained its bran & germ, remained healthy. Research finally enabled the synthesis of "thiamin", which is now used to enrich white rice & flour in most advanced countries, but not in poorer countries where the disease has been endemic. "A fascinating chronicle of a history that encompasses public health, science, diet, trade, expanding empires, war, & technology." Illustrations.

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