

Embargoed until: 11 a.m. Wednesday 21st October 2009.

NHS USE OF OLD TECHNOLOGY LEADING TO MISDIAGNOSIS

Technology that is half a century old is being used by the NHS to determine the amount of Vitamin B₁₂ in patients' blood.

This current test examines the total amount of B₁₂ in the blood but recent research has proved that there are two types of B₁₂ – Active and Inactive. It is only the Active B₁₂ that engages in the complex biochemistry that takes place to maintain good health.

“People are being denied treatment because the total level of B₁₂ in their blood is above the lower marker for B₁₂ Deficiency” says Martyn Hooper, Chairman of the Pernicious Anaemia Society.

“But that person whose blood shows that the total amount of B₁₂ is above the lower marker might have a high percentage of Inactive B₁₂ in their blood and only a small percentage of Active B₁₂. This means that they will present themselves to their doctor with all the symptoms of B₁₂ Deficiency but will not receive any treatment because their overall Serum B₁₂ level will be above the lower threshold.

“People are suffering because of this and are regularly prescribed anti-depressants because the Doctor will attribute the symptoms as being imagined” says Martyn.

A more modern and accurate test has been developed in the past few years that measures only the Active B₁₂ levels and is a far more accurate method of determining the state of the patients' blood. If left untreated, B₁₂ Deficiency leads to permanent and irreversible nerve damage and permanent disability.

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