



Hemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn Breast Feeding as a Necessary Factor in the Pathogenesis

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Abstract

THE IMPORTANCE of vitamin K in the prevention of neonatal bleeding is the subject of debate and uncertainty. Doubt has led to vacillating practice: various preparations are used, various doses are administered; indeed, various opinions are expressed with respect to the need for any vitamin K at all.

Lying-in services where little hemorrhagic disease is observed and where vitamin K is not given, tend to draw patients from higher socioeconomic groups than services where hemorrhagic disease of the newborn is a significant clinical entity. For example, recent clinical studies demonstrating a high incidence of the disease are reported from Cuba,¹ Tennessee,² and Texas.³ These studies are from services where the patients are predominantly medically indigent and from lower socioeconomic groups. The present studies were undertaken to define the frequency of hemorrhagic disease of the newborn in the medically indigent population of Cincinnati; to redefine an effective prophylactic