

B12 Revisited - Ref 151TW - Draft Transcript

with Tracey Witty

16th March 2021

TRANSCRIPT

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Steven Bruce

Today I've got one of our repeat offenders back in the virtual studio. I've had Tracy with you on the show before last time, she was actually in the studio with me. And she's going to talk to us about vitamin B 12 deficiency. Now, normally my guests are the grace and the exaltation of the medical world or elsewhere. But Tracy, Tracy, you're just a woman on you.

Tracey Witty

I'm just a woman.

Steven Bruce

Tell us about yourself, Tracy.

Tracey Witty

Well, I started my closer look at B 12 deficiency nine years ago, last month, when somebody close to me was sectioned with this deficiency. And from then I decided I needed to try and get information out to both clinicians and people with B 12 deficiency, so that they didn't experience what my loved one experienced, but also what I experienced when I found that I was b 12. deficient. So I started b 12 deficiency dot info in order to create a hub really, so that that would provide good information in amongst some of the rubbish that's written out there about b 12 deficiency.

Steven Bruce

But you were a cabinet maker, first of all, I believe, when you

Tracey Witty

I trained as a cabinet maker and upholsterer, and so I have no medical training whatsoever. I kind of learned by researching. And as most patients with B 12 deficiency find they know an awful lot more about their condition, then their doctor does, unfortunately,

Steven Bruce

And I introduced you in a very rude way. But there was a reason for that wasn't there.

Tracey Witty

And in trying to help a patient in Lincolnshire, I was communicating with a district nurse who told me that I was just a woman. And of course, I agreed and said, Yes, I am just a woman, but I'm a woman who's trying to help you to help your patients. So, it's quite common that as a lay person, trying to give out medical information to somebody who doesn't, hasn't learnt it or doesn't understand it, that they kind of get a bit upset about that. Naturally, probably.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, it's certainly true for all of us, isn't it? Remember that whether we're male or female, we are just people who happen to have one level of information in our brain about a given topic, whether or not we've

got letters after our name, you're going to have some letters after your name, I imagine in a year or so it's time

Tracey Witty

When I started a PhD, this time last year, and so hope to be completing in a couple of years, or maybe three.

Steven Bruce

And there's no prizes for guessing what the topic of your PhD is. But to be honest, I mean, it shouldn't matter. But I suppose it does to an uninformed audience to the doctors that you speak to, to the nurses who speak to, it will actually lend some credibility to your standing as an advisor on this topic, when

Tracey Witty

I think it does people view you differently. And it wasn't something that I ever thought that I needed to do or even wanted to do. And it was somebody, a friend of mine who's a professor of psychology in Australia, who really persuaded me to look at doing this. And she was the one who, you know, pushed me into applying, and I'm so pleased I did and I've got a fantastic, really lovely supervisor who is very open even though she is she's a doctor herself, but her background in mental health nursing, who's been a dream to work with.

Steven Bruce

Good. Well, I know, you know, when you last came on, we had lots of viewers for that. And I knew that so many of them were knocked out by information, which they had no idea about the scale of the problem with B 12 deficiency, and there's so many different aspects of that problem. Should we run the video that you asked me to share? First of all, just to give an idea of how bad it can be? Yep. Just an overview.

Video

Patients were coming in, that were very symptomatic, and the physicians would not test them. And I tried to educate the staff and the physicians I worked at a teaching hospital and they just went they went test the people. Pediatrician Dave Carr was told he was suffering from a rare incurable neurodegenerative disease. He was about to die, demented, blind, deaf and in a diaper, before he was correctly diagnosed with a vitamin B 12 deficiency, a condition that would have been easy to prevent and inexpensive to treat, if it had ever even crossed his mind. Dr. Carr did not know that low v 12. was drinking his brain and de myelinating his nerves. He did not know that masked v 12 deficiency damage can look just like Ms or Parkinson's or Alzheimer's or autism. There's no way in the world in the year 2005 that a vitamin deficiency can do something like this. And yet, b 12 deficiency causes serious problems ranging from fatigue, to depression to memory loss to heart disease. What your doctor doesn't know about vitamin B 12 can hurt you. Low b 12 levels are associated with a progressive cerebral atrophy. It's not a placebo, the neurological manifestations well precede the hematologic manifestation. Well, let me simply say you can't live without it. Vitamin B 12 deficiency, if left untreated, results in death.

Steven Bruce

So Tracy, I mean, the main subject of that film there that clip from the film and and we'll share the link to the full video, because it's available on YouTube, it's available on YouTube. The main subject subject, though, was a pediatrician, so he's a fully trained medical doctor, and yet he was unaware of this Sue, you'd have thought wouldn't do that their training would cover the signs and symptoms of B 12. deficiency.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, especially since he'd be seeing children with symptoms of B 12 deficiency. But the general understanding is that B 12 deficiency really doesn't affect anybody except women over 60. So oftentimes, they're not looking for it in children. They're not looking for in men, and they're certainly not looking for in adolescence. So, for Dr. Carr, you know, this was a really scary time. And as you can see, he now just walks with crutches. And it's been permanently damaged by not knowing about b 12. deficiency.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, you say he should have known him because he's treating children. Is it more common in children? It's something we should look out for in children.

Tracey Witty

Sorry, what I should say is actually every single discipline of health care whether it's pediatrician, gynecologist, gastroenterologist, each person doing medical training, or nursing should know about b 12 deficiency because it affects every single body system. It affects both sexes, and it affects all ages.

Steven Bruce

I think the conclusion we came to after last time was that basically everything is down to B 12, isn't it or potentially everything is down to B 12. Even low back pain.

Tracey Witty

It does sound like that. And obviously, not everything is down to B 12 deficiency, but what would be really key is that, you know, if it was part of a full account would be really helpful if it? I think, because our doctors don't necessarily understand all of the symptoms and certainly the mental health side of things, then it's not on their radar to click a tick box on a on a blood test form to test for it.

Steven Bruce

Can we go back a bit to basics on this? And apologies to you in the audience if I'm covering stuff that you think is old hat but b 12 deficiency and folate deficiency are often sort of lumped together, aren't they? Are they the same thing? Do they manifest the same way?

Tracey Witty

They're very similar overlapping symptoms. But the distinct differences are that folate is the big sister to be 12. Rarely, b 12 deficiency can cause neural tube defects like folate deficiency does, which is why women are told to take folic acid or some kind of folate during pregnancy. But b 12 deficiency is much more complex

because it must be given in injection form if there is a problem with the stomach. And if there is or if there's some. If there's some problem with the stomach or your inability to absorb it from food, it can't just be given in tablet form. Whereas it can be given in tablet form.

Steven Bruce

So, what is b 12 deficiency actually doing? We talked about pernicious anemia last time, but that's not the same as B 12 deficiency either, is it?

Tracey Witty

Well punished anemia is just one cause of B 12 deficiency. And it's often believed by doctors to be the most serious but actually, it's just one cause. Every everybody with B 12 deficiency has similar symptoms, the treatment should be the same unless it's because you're a vegan and vegetarian. And you are and the only reason you're deficient is through dietary lack. And then every Cause every every b 12 deficiency, regardless of the cause is serious. It's all pernicious, you will die without b 12. And whether that's because you've got the autoimmune condition, or whether it's because you've taken Metformin for diabetes, which has stopped you absorbing retar from food, or whether you've had a gastric bypass, or whether it's genetic reason, or very low stomach acid.

Steven Bruce

So, summing up the causes of B 12 deficiency that you've mentioned some drugs, you've mentioned some genetic conditions or red inherited b 12 deficiency, or is it? I'm forgetting the term I'm forgetting my terminology because I want to,

Tracey Witty

sorry, pernicious anemia to me.

Steven Bruce

No. intrinsic factor. That's right. It's a failure to be able to produce intrinsic factor, isn't it, which is the genetic component?

Tracey Witty

Well, that's the, that's the lack of intrinsic factor to unbind and transport b 12. through to the small intestine. And that can be genetic reasons for B 12. deficiency as well, there are [inaudible] two genes, which is given the transport of B 12. From the blood into the cells, methylation issues with B 12. And of late can also cause problems with B 12. And amphoe, like deficiency, and it said that about 40% of the population have these genes.

Steven Bruce

Okay, Ron has anticipated what was going to be my next question, because I think I think it's a really useful thing. One of the things that on the NHS guidelines, the nice guidelines doctors are recommended to do is

to carry out a full blood count. And he's saying, why is it not part of a basic blood test, but I think you've got a fairly good answer to that.

Tracey Witty

It should be part of a full blood count. And I think sometimes doctors rely on the mean cell volume on the main cell hemoglobin to indicate correlating b 12 deficiency. The problem is with that if there's a coexisting anemia, that will push those levels down, so that the MC V and nchr look normal. And of course, if you have supplemented with fo late, then, if you had macro cytosis, or large red blood cells, which can be an indication of between, folate deficiency, those if you supplement with fo late they it can normalize the size of those blood cells. So it would be really helpful to have b 12. As a tick box on the full blood count, yes, that was part of the full count.

Steven Bruce

Don't I recall from our last discussion that you were saying that it's all very well testing for it, but they tested it in the wrong way, and they test for the wrong range of B 12.

Tracey Witty

Well, the serum b 12 test has its limitations. And there are lots of documents. If you have a page on the site called what to do next, and point four on that page leads the reader to documents which show the reader that the serum b 12 test should be within range result on the serum b 12. test should be ignored in a symptomatic patient. So what they realize is that they're on B 12, test tests, active and inactive b 12. In the blood. And the inactive b 12. Can't be accessed and the body doesn't recognize it, but it's circulating. And there is an active b 12 test. But that's not gold standard either. So really what our doctors should be looking at is the clinical picture. And not just reliance on blood tests.

Steven Bruce

You mentioned that folate supplementation will actually normalize the size of the red blood cells. Does that cure the problem?

Tracey Witty

No, it doesn't. But I think in the past, it certainly was seen to have you know that it was thought that that did cure the problem. That's just changing the size of the red blood cells. You can't supplement fo late and expect it to correct b 12 deficiency that totally different vitamins.

Steven Bruce

It's not been uncommon in medicine in the past, how's it to assume that a change in a marker is actually fixing a problem? That's right. It is just a marker. Some more questions for you, Victoria. So she's a vegan, and her doctor recently refused to be 12 tests as part of her full blood count due to COVID. Not sure why she says

Tracey Witty

that's outrageous. And I think the problem what lots of people experienced during COVID if they were b 12. deficient and receiving injections, some GP practices, unfortunately, we're telling people they couldn't have their b 12 injection but they could come in and be tested, test their b 12 levels to see whether they actually needed their b 12. injection. Well of course, you're as close to the nurse having a b 12 injection as you are having your B 12. tested. And that was being used in order to tell people that their levels were within range, and that they no longer needed. b 12 injections. So if you are a V if you are vegan or if you are suspicious of B 12 deficiency, then you shouldn't really be refused that test.

Steven Bruce

Plus an interesting philosophy isn't it? You're allowed to come in so that we can test you for B 12. But no matter what happens, you're not going to get an injection

Tracey Witty

test. Keep bizarre what happened last year. And lots of people were just put onto tablets and told that they no longer needed injections is completely bizarre.

Steven Bruce

But also, maybe I'm leaving your head here that doesn't that fly in the face of the NHS guidelines to doctors on what you should do to support someone who's been 12 deficient? Because they never, they never come off injections surely.

Tracey Witty

Well, nice guidance does say that, you know, unless you know that it's a proven dietary lack then injections should be given. What should happen is if you are diagnosed with B 12 deficiency, you should be given a loading dose of every other day injections. And that should continue at that frequency if you're neurologically affected for as long as it takes for those symptoms to stop improving. But what generally happens for people is that they're given two weeks of loading doses. So six injections. And then they're simply told we'll see you in three months.

Steven Bruce

Right. And I think the guidelines say that even once you come off the every other day injections, you should be getting them every three months regardless.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, and the problem is with that three months is that that really doesn't suit most people. I have a weekly injection for my GP, and I've had that for years. Most people who are on the three monthly might find that, you know, even after a couple of weeks, they're really struggling to cope. But often are told, well, we'll see you in three months. And there's no alternative. Some people can get them at weekly, but it really comes down to what your relationship is like with your GP, how much your GP understands about it, and really,

the ability of the patient to really push home that they need more injections. And that is one of the things that I come across really with the site is that lots of patients really struggle to challenge their doctors.

Steven Bruce

Well, and Victoria, I think it might be the same. Victoria has come back with another question saying, would you suggest they get private lab tests? Or is it enough to go to their GP? And I guess the follow on from that is, well, how's that conversation going to go?

Tracey Witty

Well, I would say, Victoria. Lots of GPs won't accept private tests, they'll say they've not been done at our lab. But in your situation, then I would say, look, if you're not going to test me, and I'm going to pay for private tests, will you accept these results, and treat me on the basis of them. Because for an individual forking out money for private test, just be told, well, it's not been done at our lab, we're not accepting them. After they've refused you testing. Already. It's, it's outrageous.

Steven Bruce

And there are some pretty good, very reliable, respectable lamps out there on there. Do you have any that you recommend, know that you use yourself,

Tracey Witty

I don't, I don't use any I always say to patients, please go and get a serum test from the GP get a baseline, have it in your notes. And that's the way you can fight for a diagnosis. Because private testing is outside of that. And, and naturally, people do go down that route, because they are frustrated, and they're anxious and really impatient to find out what's happening, get to the bottom of it, but it is a primary care issue. This is for your GP to treat. And therefore, my advice always is even if you've had private testing, and those tests have come back, and there's something amiss, then to just make sure that you have a record of this test in your GP notes.

Steven Bruce

Right. The other part of my question was is how this How is this conversation going to go with the GP? If you come up with a GP? Who says, I don't accept those results? They weren't done by us? Or who says yes, it's all very well, I know, you've been looking at Dr. Google on the internet. But I don't think it's the thing you should be worried about. How do you approach that?

Tracey Witty

Well, I would always, I've had lots of arguments with lots of doctors, and with my own doctor, previous doctors, the point is that you are the expert of your body, and you have a right to help and care from your GP practice. I always go to the website of the GP and I look at their policies. And I often use their policies against them when I'm trying to help patients, because they'll often say things like, you know, we will provide this care, and, you know, see what's in there, go back and demand the test. And in fact, if you can't

get any sense out of the GP, then go to the practice manager and say, I don't understand why I'm not being given this test.

Steven Bruce

The practice managers have any real influence in that regard.

Tracey Witty

Someday and certainly that's where I start oftentimes because you can't necessarily reach the doctor straight off. But starting with the practice manager and and saying, you know, can you explain to me why I'm not being given this test, can you put in writing why I'm not being given this test that often yield some kind of response?

Steven Bruce

How's it worked for the people who are in touch with you because I would imagine that by now in the in a wide range of GP practices near where you live, they all know about Tracy witty and they quiver when they hear your name. For an ordinary person going along trying to do this, it's probably a little bit more scary and intimidating. You have all the facts,

Tracey Witty

I think I think the problem is for patients is that we've all been brought up to think that we're handing over our control to somebody who has wider knowledge than we do. And unfortunately, it's not always the case, but lots of problems, female problems, menopause, lots of things, but certainly with B 12 deficiency, the patient often knows more. So a lot of what I do is try and help to empower women. It's usually women that come to me and empower them to know that they know their body better than anyone else, they are the expert on it, and to just stand their ground and to say, you know, this is something I need to have treated and ought to be tested for. But it is tricky, and especially when people are often very cognitively affected, and they may be depressed, they may be apathetic, they may be really, really struggling to function. So it is bloody tough trying to fight with somebody when you are literally fighting for your life to.

Steven Bruce

Now. Coming back on the laboratory's thing, Nita has said that doctors laboratory or Genova diagnostics in London are both good labs. And we've had some other labs recommended in the past, which I can't remember off the top of my head. You mentioned menopause a minute ago, and Wendy asked whether the incidence in B 12 deficiency in women over 60 is that due to menopause?

Tracey Witty

No, not, I think that's probably more related to lower stomach acid, or the fact that you're just kind of, you know, you're running out of reserves of B 12. Or maybe even maybe drugs that you're on, maybe for other conditions.

Steven Bruce

Right. So is it is it actually more prevalent in women than in men, and to what degree

Tracey Witty

I think there is more prevalent in women purely because they have children. And if you have a child, then your b 12 covered, if you like, is being accessed by that child. But there's no other way if that child accessing b 12. And then mothers who have nitric oxide during pregnancy, if your B 12. deficient, that completely inactivated b 12. So that's an effect on it. And then as you are as we age, we have less stomach acid. And on and on really bad. I think it does affect far more women than men, but meant not to say that men aren't affected know, if they have they take drugs that cause b 12 deficiency ppis acid suppressants or levodopa for Parkinson's, there's all sorts of drugs that cause problems with people being able to absorb b 12. from food.

Steven Bruce

I wonder if there's also perhaps a greater recognition of B 12 deficiency because in the process of childbirth, they will probably be tested more rigorously, maybe men aren't being tested to the same degree.

Tracey Witty

Maybe so. And also I think that men are less well, as I understand it, men would rather not go to the doctor's as easily as readily as women would.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, possibly. I have heard that and I again, I don't know whether it's true or not. Somebody will no doubt Tell me shortly. Let's go back to some of the causative factors here. Jess has sent in a message saying that he or she sorry, Jess, I don't know which one you are. has heard, I'll call you they in keeping with our recent broadcast on gender equality. They have heard that conflicting ideas on B 12 deficiency through diets. Some say that it's through soil degradation and others insisting is more likely if you don't consume dairy or meat. Any ideas Tracy on what it is in the diet that causes it?

Tracey Witty

Well, b 12 only comes from animal products. But it's a fact that it comes from cobalt in the soil and there are certain areas of the UK that doesn't have a lot of cobalt in the soil. So animals reared on that ground then are given bonuses to make sure they have enough b 12. But there is there are no animal products at sorry, there are no plant products that contain b 12. There was a time somebody I worked with down in Devon where they have been advised as a vegan to take spirulina and seaweed because it contained b 12. But this is not correct. These are all valid locks which the body can't use and doesn't recognize.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, I remember you mentioned this before it's just run me through again, what do you mean by a b 12 analog

Tracey Witty

is just it's not active, it can't be used. So, in your circulation of your blood, do you have active b 12 which might be 20% of what is in your blood, so 80% of your serum that B 12 test may be recording inactive b 12.

Steven Bruce

Right? Oh, hence why again, the serum test is is not necessarily accurate.

Tracey Witty

It's not but the the beauty of having the serum be 12 test means that you can use the documents that state it has limitations, you can use those to help the doctor to understand that. That the the clinical picture is of utmost importance, the BMJ and ni cas, the Hema teknicks essay, and NHS choices themselves have produced information on this.

Steven Bruce

Right? Now Steven is asked whether if a patient is taking a B complex supplement, how long would it take before they should have a be 12 tests to see if that's a problem?

Tracey Witty

So the person is deficient, but then they've taken an oral supplement is that Sorry?

Steven Bruce

How long should they stop supplementing before they take the test was the question apology student.

Tracey Witty

And here's the thing really, and truly, if you think you might be be trumped efficient. People do take supplements with unknowingly thinking that that will help and that will supplement what they need. But they say to leave it around for months to be clear of supplements to get a clear test. Now, to my mind, that is just painful. If you're if you've taken supplements, you don't want to be suffering for another four months, just in case you get a clear test, I would suggest under those circumstances that you go to your doctor, and that you say I want to be tested. But I have supplemented. So I need that noting on the lab form so that they can look at that, alongside my result.

Steven Bruce

How will those supplements distort the test?

Tracey Witty

Well, it will look like you've got a healthy level of B 12. And you turn over a red blood cells really to about be about 120 days. So for around four months, you could look like you've got a really good level of B 12. But that's nothing, there's no indication of what's happening at a cellular level. And if your patient is severely symptomatic, then it's quite clear that you know, often young patients with family history, they're symptomatic, and then they've gone and taken a supplement. So it's skewed the results. And so people will

say we need to stay off those for four months before but that person's suffering. So they need to go and get it sorted straightaway.

Steven Bruce

But doesn't. Again, I'm struggling to get to terms with this. I mean, it will look as though I've got a healthy level of B 12. But I haven't. So what is it? I have God that's making you look that way? Is it another analog?

Tracey Witty

Well, it's just that the the B 12 has gone in to the system but you've not got the equipment to take that through to the small intestine or to unbind beat what you know you can't unbind b 12 from food, an oral supplement they say you can get 1% by passive diffusion for what's 1% you know, it's not going to heal the nerves. It's not going to make me feel great very quickly.

Steven Bruce

Okay, Sally is asked whether sublingual b 12 supplementation is all right, if you can't get an injection,

Tracey Witty

sublingual b 12. Some people, it's usually in the form of methyl cobalamin. It doesn't do anything for me. But some people do report that it's okay for them. It's not, there's not an awful lot of research on the sublinguals. And it is an absolute fact that injections are the most efficient and most effective form of administration of B 12.

Steven Bruce

Okay, and just says so you don't get cobalt from eating vegetables with soil on them. Question mark. This is what I've been told lately. Good to know. So Jess is saying that's good to know. So there was gonna be a question. I saw the question marks in

Tracey Witty

what Yeah, I'd always wash my bed before a load of mud. Firstly, but yeah, he can't tell what you wouldn't know

Steven Bruce

whether in terms of diet broccoli always gets a good press. I think broccoli is good for B 12 as well. There is no Oh, yeah.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, I've been told that before. She just needs to eat some broccoli. And I also have I think last time we had the really sad blood results from a patient who habito of level was below range. She should have been treated and the doctor just simply circled it and said advance leafy green veg, and that poor patient was permanently damaged in in a wheelchair. And what I would say actually, and I think this, what I would love is that in the future, we can make b 12 injections available over the counter in this country. Because most of

the countries around the world allow people to buy them from pharmacies and self inject. And what many people do who don't necessarily want to fight with their doctor because they're not well enough to is that they do source their own veto from generally German pharmacies and treat themselves in the absence of help from their GP.

Steven Bruce

Can you get injectable b 12. From a German pharmacy?

Tracey Witty

You can you can buy that perfectly legally for your own use. And of course, in the in the UK, there are lots of clinics and hairdressing salons and beauty salons that can provide you with a B 12 injection because of an M HRA. What should we say loophole where they can call it a supplement, they're not allowed to work with us the word deficiency, they can say it's a health boost. So that's how they get around it.

Steven Bruce

Okay, those injections intramuscular.

Tracey Witty

They are licensed for intramuscular in the UK, but most people who self inject use? Well, I say some people use subcutaneous needles, and that's what I use.

Steven Bruce

And the dose is how much one mil. Right. So it's one milligram. Every other day, I think you said earlier on Is that right?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, that's the loading dose. And that's what generally people are started on. And then like I said, that frequency should continue for as long as it takes for neurological symptoms to stop improving. And that could be some time, you know, I know people who are still on that frequency. It's all dependent on how long you have been without b 12. What your level of damages. And each person is the expert at how much they should have.

Steven Bruce

So you said you know some people who've been on that loading dose, but you didn't say for how long? I'm guessing it's quite a long time.

Tracey Witty

Yes, some people you know, are in need of far more be 12 than others.

Steven Bruce

Justin's asked whether there are any adverse effects from B 12 supplementation,

Tracey Witty

there is no known toxicity of B 12. It can be used in huge doses. So that five grams can be given to a newborn child to treat cyanide poisoning. But there is in rare occasions anaphylaxis to either the cobalt itself or the buffer solution. But that is very rare. That for the B 12. itself there is there is no known toxicity and hasn't been for I think it's 50 or 60 years of use.

Steven Bruce

Okay. And I imagine there are some people out there using fairly high doses on Yeah, yeah. We got more stuff on the diet. We always get lots of stuff on diet from osteopaths and chiropractors. tissues asked about plant sources A B 12. She seems to think that we're not getting anything in plant products. I think that's quite true. Are all vegetarians and vegans going to become deficient if they don't take supplements? And how do complete vegetarians and vegans ever get retold? If they don't think so plans?

Tracey Witty

Wait there is there are no plant sources of it. So you need to supplement properly. If you're a vegetarian, and you're eating dairy and you're eating eggs, then you're getting some b 12. But it is something that you need to keep your eye on and supplementing properly with a good quality. b 12 will help enormously to keep symptoms at bay. But it's if you're becoming ill if you are, you know experiencing symptoms that when people a lot of people do veganuary and then they start to notice symptoms that they've never had before then you know, you can put it down to be 12 if it goes when you start eating animal products again,

Steven Bruce

there was there was one study years ago and it's it's apocryphal I remember it being mentioned to me when I went through osteopathy training, that there was a group of complete vegans who did not suffer from B 12 deficiency. And as I recall, what they found was that there actually bugs in their food that they were eating without realizing it. I don't know how big I didn't have big bugs or what the bugs were but so there is hope for complete vegans after all, maybe so

Steven Bruce

Victoria says she apologizes for sounding stupid, but can't you just take b 12. Anyway to be on the safe side?

Tracey Witty

You could but I think that the key thing here is that if you're vegan, but you've also got pernicious anemia, or you've got low stomach acid or you're taking another drug, then you might be b 12. deficient not just because of dietary lack, and that's the key. You know, if you're taking a supplement, and you're thinking okay, I'm supplementing b 12. But actually you've got a latent deficiency for another reason Then it's really key to get a baseline test and, and just kind of keep your eye on your symptoms. And that sounds that I'm trying to cover all bases there, but not all. Just avoiding it in your diet does not mean that you can't have it for another reason.

Steven Bruce

Right. Okay. I've just seen a question or observation coming from Jeff. He's put this much more eloquently than I did a moment ago. Thank you for that. Jeff. He says he's heard that microorganisms that live in and on plants can produce b 12, which we can live on. He's asked whether that's true or not, I'm saying It must be because I heard it years and years ago, I don't think you need to do. Tracy,

Tracey Witty

I don't know about those. And I think, you know, if you're vegan, and you're really healthy, and you know, two, three years down the road, you're still really healthy, then you're getting something from somewhere. And who knows where that is. There's so many. Now I work with the vegan society to do the page on my site and have unfortunately worked with a lot of individual vegans who become be 12 deficient. And the one thing we all want to do is live and function well. And if you feel well, and you're looking well and your friends around you saying you look well and you're doing great, then that's marvelous. But if there's any indication of ill health as a vegan, then B 12 might be the culprit.

Steven Bruce

Okay. Myles is asked about lyso Sumo put him in B 12. Can it be transported into the bloodstream through that mechanism?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, like so more? b 12. You know, it's a bit like with the sublinguals, you're bypassing the stomach, you're using the mucosa. Some of the there are different forms of B 12. So methylcobalamin is an active b 12. And touted by a lot of natural therapists to be the best form. But actually, it doesn't suit everybody. hydroxocobalamin is the form we use on the NHS and you can get lighter, so more forms in hydroxide. And so that might be a really good one to try for people who are interested in it. And so I'm not discounting the fact that these do work for some people, but they don't work for everybody, but they will raise levels regardless of whether it works or not. Okay,

Steven Bruce

we're gonna have to get off the topic of diet and nutrition in a second and move on to something else, but Claire says she thinks it's weasels in the flower I don't think is weasels. Claire. Manuel says is b 12. In miso and adequate source.

Tracey Witty

me so? Yes, I don't know. It's me. So Sawyer,

Steven Bruce

who knows about these things will tell me, no doubt, Claire will come back because she knows well. There's what I want to promise people in my email that went out earlier on today, or Anna's email that went out early on today was that we talked about some of the success stories that you've heard with B 12 deficiency,

and you deal with an awful lot of people who come to you for advice, and so on. If you've got any of those that you want to share anonymously, obviously,

Tracey Witty

I can tell you about my mum, because she doesn't mind me telling about you about her. She was a nurse. So when I first started in this game, she kind of thought that's interesting, but didn't really think it applied to her. So even though I could see it a mile off, that it was affecting her, she wouldn't have a bar of it until she hit rock bottom. And that's the point where she let me help her. And let me write to a doctor about it because my dad had a b 12 level tested, and she was within range at around 323. And at that point, she was apathetic, depressed. She wasn't, she wasn't able to walk far her breathing was affected. Her bladder was affected, various symptoms. So I wrote to her GP and said, Look, I noticed within range, but look at these documents, and I run this website, and we have methylation issues in our family. And please, could you try my mom? A trial of B 12 injections. So her doctor wrote back to mom and said, Your daughter's written to me? Are you happy to try this? And Mom said yes. And she literally in the first two weeks of having her b 12 injections and a good level of folate flowered, absolutely flowered. And she then said to me, Oh, my God, why the hell did it take me six years to listen to you? And she says now that she can't believe how well she feels that she feels more well than she ever has. So, and I honestly in my 50s feel more well than I ever have because of genetic problems. We've all in our family had been struggling with this from an early age.

Steven Bruce

Right. So this leads me on, I think, to talking about what we might look for, not just in our family members, but when someone comes to us in clinic, what are the sorts of clues the indicators that might make us start to think that we should look down the B 12 route.

Tracey Witty

And one of the key things is that people might be when they're coming to see you, they may have problems, they may have an ataxic gait, they may have physical radicular pathway or widespread pain. They may have a scalloped tongue or cracked corners of their mouth. They may be very pale, they may have real weakness in the muscles. They may have prematurely graying hair or hair loss. There's so many symptoms. And I suppose, because you're taking a good history, then you're going to hit upon things that a GP may not have time to spot, but the visual clues are how they how they walk, do they experience dizziness, and the paler and not everyone's pale, not everyone loses weight. But there are some distinct physical clues that you can see in somebody the minute they walk in the door.

Steven Bruce

I think there's there's one which struck me from the NHS list, I think, which is particularly bilateral paraesthesia in the legs. Now if we if we end up seeing somebody who's got bilateral nerve symptoms in their legs, we start to get warning bells ringing in our in our heads. And we'd be thinking then, well, if there's any loss of sensation, maybe we're starting thinking record recliner problem, which I know is well, your field. But I mean, it's gonna be hard sometimes to differentiate the musculoskeletal condition from this nutritional deficiency, isn't it?

Tracey Witty

Yeah. And I think, you know, if you've got one symptom of B 12 deficiency, you've got a handful. So we on the site, there's an app, we produced an IU at risk app. So even a quick flick down that for the patient might indicate that there you know, an awful lot more things going on there than a visible at the time. Say the numbness and tingling can be a key symptom in patients, or fingers and toes.

Steven Bruce

Right. Okay. Manuel has come back with some information about me. So thank you, man. Well, he says it's soy fermented with a mold Koji, with byproducts including methyl cobalamin. Lots of umami. So there we are.

Tracey Witty

Alright, well, it tastes alright then. But if you've got methylcobalamin in and that's been added in, then you can get some beta off from it.

Steven Bruce

Going back to the business of overdosing on B 12. Lots of people have been asking about that. You answered that question earlier on, but they're also asking whether there are any contraindications to taking b 12.

Tracey Witty

Some people when they start on V 12, fear experience a kind of rash or acneiform rash. That has been said to have been the homocysteine, which, right it's an amino acid, which rises to a toxic level, that that is a good indication that that's leaving the body. Now, I have no paper that backs that up. But it used to be on one of the big 12 websites. So that what is key about that rash is that once you have a good level of B 12, you don't get that rash anymore, I experienced it, and my family members have experienced it too. And you can get that anywhere on your face, chest in your scalp. That goes when you've got a good level good constant level of B 12. Okay.

Steven Bruce

Tim says that you've mentioned low stomach acid on several occasions already. What are the typical symptoms of low acid,

Tracey Witty

low acid and high acid have the same symptoms. And so unfortunately, when somebody goes into the, to the doctors with heartburn and these kinds of things, then they're often given antacids, without actually checking whether that is low stomach acid, or high stomach acid. And because the symptoms are identical, then it's really tricky unless you you know, look deeper into what this is. But if you're an elderly person, then generally speaking, your stomach acid lowers as we get older.

Steven Bruce

And the symptoms that they're going to experience would be

Tracey Witty

with low stomach acid. Is it hard,

Steven Bruce

I can have a look. You got a cheat sheet.

Tracey Witty

I've got a cheat sheet. I've got an iPad here. They are. They are very similar and it's very tricky for people to differentiate for doctors to differentiate between the two but I know that they are the same as high stomach acid.

Steven Bruce

We're still getting loads of questions about Direct coming in here in nutrition,

Tracey Witty

low stomach acid symptoms cramping, nausea, constipation, heartburn, acid reflux, halitosis, excuse me loss of appetite. Excuse me gastric reactivity.

Steven Bruce

Right? Okay. Martine has asked about Metformin and other medications that stopped b 12. absorption? Will they always cause a deficiency in the long term?

Tracey Witty

I think prolonged use of these drugs do cause an inability to absorb, be 12. So, think doctors are Fingers crossed, they're becoming more and more aware of acid suppressants and Metformin, causing problems. So they should, it should be on their radar to test people who've been on those drugs for a certain length of time. I mean, it should be from the beginning. Cause

Steven Bruce

I had a question about nitrous oxide as well, I can't ask this one. What's the actual mechanism whereby nitric oxide suppresses? b 12. absorption?

Tracey Witty

It doesn't suppress it in activates b 12. In the body pletely. In activates it?

Steven Bruce

Yep. Do you have the mechanisms to do what?

Tracey Witty

It takes it from? Heart remember the name stage? stage one to stage two? Something like that? My don't remember, you want me to look on my iPad? Oh,

Steven Bruce

no, no. We can all do that. But I suppose the question that arises for me is well, people don't take nitric oxide unless you're doing it illegally in recreational don't take it very often or very frequently. So presumably, the effect of nitrous oxide is short lived?

Tracey Witty

Well, it can be unless if you're, if you take nitrous oxide, say recreationally or even in during pregnancy, and you have not got an undiagnosed deficiency, then, if you've been activated, or B 12, in your body, then you can rebuild that when you start eating food with B 12. And then you've got no other problem with it. If you've taken b 12, recreationally to the point where you are, you've had a problem with your heart, and you are not getting any better, then it may be that there was a latent b 12 deficiency there, and you're not able to just build those reserves up again, you will need b 12 injections.

Steven Bruce

Alright. Ron wants to get a bit personal here. He wants to know what your symptoms were when you went to get yourself tested, what made you do it.

Tracey Witty

And I realized when researching for my loved one that I had many symptoms, I'd had multiple, early miscarriages. I had problems with my bladder and my bowel, my memory. My memory loss was the problem for me the biggest the scariest symptom for me, I felt like I'd be one of those people who they might say, Oh, she's in. She's got early onset Alzheimer's, I literally felt that worried about it, I had difficulty recalling names, names of things. So the fridge wouldn't be afraid anymore. It'd be the big white box that holds the cold things or using lots of words to describe simple things.

Steven Bruce

Right? That was that immediately obvious to you that it was b 12? Or did you were you just scared that there was something weird going on?

Tracey Witty

I know, I think because I had my baptism through this loved one, then I had read an awful lot of information. And it dawned on me one day that our God, this is a family thing. So it did kind of gradually crept up on me. And when I was tested, I was lucky that in my area, the reference range is 220 to 700, I think so my level was to 16. And I was just in under that low reference range. So it meant that my fight to get treatment in the first instance wasn't a problem at all. And I have to say that within the first two weeks of getting treatment, I found that so many like the blurred vision I'd gone to the optician for who couldn't

find anything wrong, that corrected within those first two weeks, my bowel and bladder corrected within those first two weeks. But of course, once they tried to put me then onto monthly I just was not coping

Steven Bruce

really interesting. You you there gave a range of tolerance for B 12. Wendy asked earlier, what's that? What's the baseline figure for B 12. And you said it was 220? A moment ago has it changed?

Tracey Witty

That's in my area, but that that every single area has a different asset kit. So in Lancashire, their low reference range used to be 110. In North Wales, it's 150. In South Wales, it's 130. So it's ludicrous rarely that, you know, there may be certain areas of the country where people really struggle to get a diagnosis because they don't necessarily understand that these symptoms. serum b 12 test has its limitations so they don't know that. b 12 is the culprit but they just sent off down a different route to find out what else it might be. And this by this, I mean, the patients who sent off down the different route, but also the doctors too.

Steven Bruce

I don't understand that because surely in nice guidelines somewhere or in the clinical Handbook, which is used by every doctor in the country, it must say what the bottom, the bottom number in the range for B 12 is?

Tracey Witty

Well, they're saying anything under 150 should be treated in separate each primary care trust might have a different algorithm for how it should be treated. So Gloucestershire, I think, is pretty bad. I did blog about their ridiculous ways of diagnosing and treating. So

Steven Bruce

I've improved as a result, no. Right. So I'm so sorry, I didn't interrupt you there. And I apologize, but I'm intrigued. What are their ways of diagnosing and treating the differ from anyone elses?

Tracey Witty

Well, they, I think they suggest certain that tablets should be given a certain level and that and some say, Oh, just retest in three months, or only people with pernicious anemia can have certain injections. I mean, I might be mixing the Gloucester thing up with somebody some other areas, because every single trust seems to have a different set of rules about how they do or don't treat and even different GP practices. One GP in a practice might want to treat the patient but the head GP says no.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. I wonder why they would do that. Well, I would think it was Wendy earlier on asked how much b 12 injections cost? Is this a vast drain on the NHS resources?

Tracey Witty

No, it's very little. When I first started the petition to try and make b 12. available over the counter. I think there was 69 Pence, and then that costs went down to 55 pence. And I think the last time I checked, they weren't doing per ampere cost they were doing per box, which is five amperes. I think it was one pound 85 per ampere all at that point. So the cost is very little and of course to buy from Germany, it's about 60 pence an ampere, so you can buy 100 ampules for less than 60 euros for around 60 euros.

Steven Bruce

Right now, I'm when I looked up the B 12 deficiency on the NHS website since I was expecting to find some nice guidelines which stipulate what people should do. But there aren't any nice guidelines that I could find there was just there is a page about b 12 deficiency, but it's not it's not a formal, nice guideline, which directs doctors how to behave, or am I wrong?

Tracey Witty

It's the C care summary. So and but lots of sometimes when people are battling with their doctor, their doctor will say, well, they're just guidelines. I don't have to follow it up. So it is really it is all really tricky. There are so many different barriers to treatment and diagnosis A B 12. deficiency.

Steven Bruce

Okay, observation here from Anna. Anna says her daughter had gi symptoms for a while I didn't know what the symptoms were. And Anna was worried that she'd have vitamin deficiencies. So took her list of the GP for testing. Interestingly, her b 12, was incredibly high and had to be monitored for a few months. Her levels lowered again as the GI symptoms improved. Apparently certain bacterial overgrowth can produce it.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, I think there is documentation about cebo can look like you've got a high level and then they do look for an underlying pathology, b 12. Without any supplementation at all, if that's very high. But of course, I think it parasites certain parasites synthesize b 12, as well, so it can look higher than it is.

Steven Bruce

And that is of course, we mustn't confuse that with the business of can you overdose on B 12. If you without supplementation if you've got a high level of B 12, there must be something else going on that's causing is is the is the message everything, isn't it?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, I mean, unfortunately, some of our doctors kind of mix that bit up with. So they'll test somebody for B 12. Having given them an injection the day before or on the same day, test the beat well, and then say, oh, my goodness, you've got too much we need to stop is dangerous. And so there are lots of doctors do believe that it's dangerous, if you are over 2000 when you're already on treatment, but of course, it's not at all you'll always be quite high if you test the day after you've had an injection. And for some time after

Steven Bruce

David says Do you have any comments on topping up with hydroxocobalamin such as liposomal form if the B 12 injection frequency is inadequate?

Tracey Witty

No, if the life cycle form is working for somebody, then I would you know, take it if it's helping the person. You know, in an ideal world, we'd be able to buy our own v 12 and be in control of our own treatment and have it as in when we need it because We are the expert. Unfortunately nicey cast guidance assumes we're all the same, that we've all been diagnosed at the same level of deficiency, and that we all have the same lifestyles and that we all are the same size. You know, it's ludicrous to think that anybody's treatment is identical.

Steven Bruce

I'm cases asked whether IBS and celiac increase your likelihood of B 12.

Tracey Witty

Well, IBS can be a symptom of B 12. deficiency. And celiac, of course, causes malabsorption of lots of nutrients. So many people with celiac are b 12. deficient.

Steven Bruce

I think chromes specifically as a cause of B 12 deficiency or can be isn't it?

Tracey Witty

crowns all sort of color, ulcerative colitis, and all sorts of things that affect the the bowel. And if you've had your terminal alien operated on, if you have a traffic gastritis, anything that stops you absorbing nutrients can lead to B 12. deficiency?

Steven Bruce

Okay, in those what the app is, I think he's referring to your website. So your website is

Tracey Witty

it's b 12 deficiency dot info. And there's an app page on there. We have a monitor app as well, for patients who can monitor the severity of their symptoms, the website will be updated over the next few weeks. So it'll look a little different, and be less text heavy.

Steven Bruce

Well, yeah, I'm glad to hear that you know that you're still pushing the information out through the website, because last time I remember you said that if people are having problems getting through to the GP, I think you offer some support in that regard, don't you?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, I do. I do offer personalized help to, you know, people come for all sorts of reasons, whether it's that they want me to contact their GP for them, or whether they want help with just understanding the condition because oftentimes, they've been given very little, or very confusing information from their GP or from another support group. So often, what I'm doing is unraveling, unraveling incorrect information, and helping the person on the right track to recovery.

Steven Bruce

On that same note, I mean, I'm not sure if I didn't ask this question properly last time. But Rufus asked if you could run through again, what use what you told your mother to say to the GP, in order to what you said to the GP in order to get your mother treated.

Tracey Witty

I, what I always do, and what I think most people should do is always put down that clinical picture. So in our family there, you know, my my grandmother happy to have injections, my mom's mom, and then I listed her symptoms. And I listed and I noted down her b 12 level, which was within range. But then I also added the documents 1.4 on the what to do next page to state that this should not be ignored in a symptomatic patient. And then I simply asked, could they have a trial of B 12 injections to confirm the deficiency and she was very lucky, rarely that her doctor was open to this. And, and providing links to the website actually helped the doctor to do some research beforehand.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, maybe that's a key element there isn't it is letting the doctor know beforehand what it is you're concerned about and providing that resource. Yeah, because that means that they didn't have to go away and look it up on or rely on the basis of half an hour's training during their medical degree. Again, this is all it's important stuff for us is that it's not just communicating with a patient but it's also communicating with fellow healthcare professionals in the wider arena. But I think there's also there's a certain amount here of listening to our own patients isn't there and and seeing beyond the musculoskeletal skeletal thing that they may have come in with or maybe listening to the person who comes in with them and picking up clues as things which might indicate a b 12 problem.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, and I think one of the very common first presenting symptoms can be depression or chronic fatigue. And I think that the worst thing about the nice guidance is that there are certain do not do recommendations and one of those is do not test for B 12. deficiency and less unless anemia is present or something now I did blog about this a few years I think was 2013. But those do not do recommendations stop people from being tested even in it's just bizarre.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Victoria is our she also ages ago actually what you would recommend in terms of high street supplements that is there a spectrum of quality for B 12 supplementation.

Tracey Witty

There is like anything really out I use all active active. B vitamins. So I use a company called health leads in Wales, and they don't have any magnesium stearate or any weird fillers and stuff in their supplements. So a good quality supplements always going to be better than something that you buy for a quote from wilcos.

Steven Bruce

Right. Okay. And Sagar and people like that, that sort of the the mainstream providers of supplements have any good?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, I mean it's always a case of socket and see, they don't suit everybody and just in case of trying them seeing what suits you every every supplement has a different milligram edge and your microgram edge. And so you it's about finding something that suits you. Now for me, I don't tolerate any folic acid. So I take active B vitamins and methylfolate. But methylfolate can be tricky for people, if they can't cope with that methyl donor in there. So folinic acid might be better for them. But folic acid, for some people is really tricky. And they can't convert it. But not it's not necessarily widely understood by GPS.

Steven Bruce

But what you said makes it actually quite difficult for anyone, doesn't it? Because if you have if we have a patient who we think possibly has b 12 deficiency or they think they have not only are they going to try and get the dose, right, but they've also got to go and try and get the brand right. And in in amongst all that they've got to decide how long am I going to give this before I go and see the GP and complain that something's not well?

Tracey Witty

Well, in those under those circumstances, if you as a practitioner, had somebody come to you and you think they'd be 12 deficient, then I would suggest, the best thing for them is really to if they could take a look at the website and follow the pathway to getting tested. First of all, if they possibly can with their GP, and I fully appreciate that, they may not want to do that, or it may not be possible for them, certainly given the situation where at the moment. So then testing for B 12 in a private way, just so they know now that point is that if that person does want to work through their GP in any way, and wants to sort themselves out, then it doesn't matter or not, you know, whether you where you get a test from, you can get a private test and you can sell treat privately by buying from abroad if you want or buy or having your first be 12 injection, at least from somebody medically trained with an epi pen, just in case there's a problem with anaphylaxis. But

Steven Bruce

is that is that a possibility?

Tracey Witty

anaphylaxis? Yes, it is very rare. But yes, it is a possibility. It never happened to me. And certainly when I had my first injection, I don't think the nurse was aware that that could be a possibility. You're not told to sit and wait there. Let me just see if you're okay, you're given an injection and off you are off you go. So it is rare, but it can happen. So you know, if you are going to embark on treatment on your own, then it would be advised that you get your first injection, at least at the very least from somebody who's medically trained who has an epi pen, just in case. But if we can make b 12 injections available over the counter, then who's to say that osteopaths and chiropractors can't help people in this regard with that at least their first injection, as it comes to buying supplements. It's like buying food, you do your research, you look at the views, do you find the best thing that suits you, it might be that the you know, the one that you've always had is great for you. For me, it took me a bit of trial and error, trying certain things to see what suited me. And I think people become much more able to discern what's working for them once they've gotten good level of B 12. And the cognitive function is returning you know, know when you're taking things how they make you feel. If high dose folic acid is making you feel nausea, then ditch it and try something else.

Steven Bruce

Okay, do you find that many people have a silly question? Are people genuinely prepared to inject themselves? And if so many people who are scared stiff of needles, let alone injecting themselves?

Tracey Witty

No, I think it's a terrifying thing for lots of people. And it's not just terrifying because you're injecting yourself. It's because you feel like you're doing something wrong when you're not doing it with the the understanding of your doctor. People feel like they are doing something bad that they are almost doing drugs. Of course they're not it's a vitamin. There's no other way of getting it for most people then via injection, so it's a really nerve racking thing. One good thing that happened during COVID is that some really good doctors produced little films for their patients and provided them with an pill so that they could sell fleet safely injector at home. And that, you know, for so many patients with a real fraying and a real feeling of having control back in their lives and being trusted by their GP to look after themselves. So the thing with B 12 is certainly with hydroxocobalamin. It stings like hell, it's not a pleasant thing to do. And I've only ever in all the years I've been having v2, I've given myself one injection. And that's because my husband who normally gives it to me was away. And it made me sweat. And I really didn't, you know, I don't want to do it again. He I'm frightened of injections, it stings. So in order to make me feel comfortable, he tells me he's going to take a run up, and he's given me direction, just to make me calm.

Steven Bruce

Right, okay, sure, I'm calm, I'd feel about that. No one is in in the injection, which causes that anaphylactic reaction in some people, it surely not be 12.

Tracey Witty

Well, it could be cobalt is the iron. And if you're allergic to cobalt, and some people are, then that can be the bit that causes you the anaphylaxis. Now, I think it's in Thomas's where they do help people with an allergy

to cobalt, even though then you know, when you need b 12. It comes from cobalt. So they have a desensitization program to help people to have the injections. I don't know how that works, or who meant how many people use it, but there is a program for that. Right? Okay.

Steven Bruce

We got an observation sent in by Lucy a little while ago, she's talking about a patient of her own, she says was refused her an HSP 12 because she was unwilling to allow her levels to drop enough to qualify for it by their standards. She got a private injection and is now self administering. She's lived with this for a long time and knows how she feels when her levels are quite low. It's a good result for the patient. But it's a sad result for the NHS when that happens. And

Tracey Witty

it is and you know, just this bizarre, can you imagine saying to a diabetic, can we wait to You nearly dead before we give you some more insulin wouldn't happen? And yet, time and time again, this critical nutrients that sustains life can be restricted, and even withdrawn totally from people who need it. It is absolutely outrageous.

Steven Bruce

How long I completely understand why that person has decided to self inject they have more control over themselves. The pediatrician we saw in the video at the beginning of the show here. Do you know how long it took him to get to that sort of vegetative state that we saw him in in the in his chat?

Tracey Witty

No, I don't and it doesn't discuss it in the film. And Alyssa Leonard who made the film met with Dave part and I think there was a photograph taken at the time. And while I say who's so lucky that a friend of his recognize what it could be, but they said severe neurological neurodegenerative disease, which is what it looks like when it's

Steven Bruce

far gone. When you mentioned Alzheimer's earlier on Are there any other diseases which might mimic that we might we might or GPS might mistake for

Tracey Witty

Ms can be misdiagnosis, bipolar, psychosis, Parkinson's, there's a lot of them. Bipolar, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome. There are so many and even when you say those names, like we say Parkinson's, you know there's a tremor with that. Lots of people with B 12 deficiency have this benign essential tremor, which goes very quickly with B 12. injections, bipolar, a lot of mental health symptoms and diagnosis. And they've got to that stage, but they've never had a physical cause ruled out. And so anybody who's presenting with depression or psychosis or suicidal ideations should be tested for B 12. deficiency,

Steven Bruce

right? You said, I thought I could see a tail wagging in the corner there was an ear flapping. You said that it could mimic the symptoms of Ms. presume it does it does it go as far as producing the sort of plaques that you would get in Ms.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, you if you had an MRI scan, and you have lesions, and ink and writing saying that in B 12. deficiency, they are symmetrical and in MS, they're scattered.

Steven Bruce

Okay. So there is a possible clue there in the diagnose, would that perhaps go unnoticed in a conventional assessment, they'd see the plaques they see the lesions and say, we know what this is?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, certainly. I mean, I think that's the point if you are not fully versed in understanding that that could be a miss diagnose b 12 deficiency, then you are naturally going to decide that it's Ms. And the same with outsiders or dementia, you know, cognitive decline in 12 deficiency is common. But if if you're not coupling that up with other symptoms that the patient has, and you're, you know, you're looking for outsiders, then that's what you might get diagnosed with.

Steven Bruce

The one necessarily always be other symptoms will vary, I mean, presumably could present with one or a few of the things that you've mentioned.

Tracey Witty

Yeah, absolutely. Everybody, I mean, even in my family each for each of us, family members, and Damian, my husband as well as be 12 deficient, we all have different symptoms. And sometimes you could have three or four. And, and not necessarily some people who might have really low b 12 levels, but are you know, don't have any symptoms. It and then therefore, if you haven't got any symptoms, then don't require treatment until you know you are symptomatic, if you like, but every single body system is affected from head to toe. It's it's manifestation and each person is is completely different.

Steven Bruce

And what are the visual symptoms that people might suffer from?

Tracey Witty

premature graying?

Steven Bruce

So I'm an ocular if you like.

Tracey Witty

So you might mean the damage to the optic nerve when you consider that B 12. deficiency affects your nerves. So Leber's optic atrophy is something that can be treated with B 12. But not cyanocobalamin, because that can worsen that condition. But so yeah, the nerves of the eye can be affected. And that may be like I said, when I had blurred vision, and I'd gone to the opticians having had 20/20 vision, he said there is nothing wrong with your eyes. And yet, I'm saying well, why can't Why is this page moving? Why can't lead? Why don't these words stay still? So oftentimes, when people have certain symptoms, they'll go to see the optician or whoever it is, and now say there's nothing wrong, I can see nothing.

Steven Bruce

Okay, Kathy is asked whether you see many cases where you hear of many cases of B 12. deficiency in children. We mentioned them briefly at the beginning. But

Tracey Witty

yeah. And cases in children are really tricky. I've been at appointments with where GPS have said to the child who's clearly b 12. deficient? Would you like injections? Now? What nine year old is ever going to say yes, I'd love injections. Yeah. Do they hurt? Yes, please sign me up. You know, a lot of doctors don't want to test for B 12 deficiency, because they don't want to draw blood from a child because it hurt the child. And then they don't want to give injections because that will hurt the child. But of course children get beat up should say.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, and what sort of things is child complain about? Or is it something that parents notice rather than the child mentions?

Tracey Witty

Well, the red flags to look out for is there all sorts of things again, depression, fatigue, could be autistic, like withdrawal could be OCD tics could be you know, the manifestations are similar to the adult ones. But then there's things like developmental delay, a small head

growth,

Tracey Witty

smaller person, floppiness in a baby. And it is really heartbreaking with children because, you know, they haven't got the time to hang around for a specialist. appointment. And often GPS are afraid of treating children, they want the back of a pediatrician, or a neurologist or somebody else to say, it's okay to treat this child, because they feel concerned about it being a child, and it being injections. But of course, it is a primary care issue.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. So again, parents have got to be alert for this and maybe just a little bit more forceful if they think it could be a problem. Yeah, I

Tracey Witty

think it's really tricky, because, as I understand it, if you have a child who is presenting with autistic like traits, or ADHD, then the school will often point this out, and then the school will have a mechanism for taking people down this pathway. And if the you know if we could teach the teachers or the people who point this out that B 12 deficiency might be a differential diagnosis and that leads to check that out first, it may help the parent enormously, because if you can treat b 12 deficiency in a child quickly and easily then there is less chance of permanent damage. But of course, that child's nervous system is still developing so there is a chance of permanent damage in a child.

Steven Bruce

You mentioned ticks a moment ago and Rachel sent in a question a little while back saying could be 12 deficiency be misdiagnosed as Tourette's.

Tracey Witty

Tourette possibly I mean, I've not read a lot of papers on Tourette's, but certainly, you know, tics, OCD, all these kinds of things. If you've got, if you've got just Tourette's, and there are no other symptoms on there then you know, maybe not but have a look at the other symptoms. Usually when people have one they have got a few others and some that they don't you know, you wouldn't ask surprising. And the weird thing is that the list I have on the site, you would have seen Sally patch lock and Jeff, Dr. Jeff Stewart in that film, they're the people who wrote Could it be be 12 and I use their research on the website. Now their symptom list is huge, but it's not exhaustive. And there's symptoms that don't appear on that list that people find just miraculously go. So they are the most common symptoms reported symptoms but there are symptoms that aren't on there that you know that people experienced that just are remedied with B 12.

Steven Bruce

I feel this is the point where I really need a long case history from somebody telling me about their experiences because you because you need to drink some water and

Tracey Witty

Tracy heads down my throat or something

Steven Bruce

we've got about we've got about 10 minutes left so if you can bear with us just for a little while we great Victoria, Victoria has says she's just found out that Superdrug do a b 12 injection service and they will accept a private test. Were you aware of that?

Tracey Witty

Well, I had seen Superdrug do it and I did try and ring them. Actually, I think that Superdrug, if I'm right, and I could be wrong, is they will give injections to people who are diagnosed who have a below range test. I mean, hopefully they will accept people who haven't got the low range test too. But I've not actually spoken to them. That great if you can get b 12. from anywhere in this day and age. Because you know, it's becoming harder and harder to get your doctor to give it to some people then go to supertruck

Steven Bruce

Good idea. Adrian center question, Adrian, nice to hear from you. It's nice to hear from everybody. But I actually trained as an osteopath with Adrian. So and I haven't seen him come up on my question this before. Adrian says can it cause sleep disturbances and insomnia?

Tracey Witty

Oh, yes, it can. I forgot to say that was another one of my

Steven Bruce

remember Adrian from training? I'll bet he already knew that he was a brightspark, then. Yes. Is that prominent? So you know, one of the first symptoms you might experience for some

Tracey Witty

people. I mean, for me, it was a but also, and I'm sure I didn't realize this too, is that menopause can really screw up your sleep too. So if you happen to be just finding that you've got a deficiency alongside perimenopause or menopause, then your sleep will invariably go to pot.

Steven Bruce

Okay. Vladimir has said that he has been placed on a methyl B supplement by his nutritional therapist. It's a good quality supplement. And he finds it's making him very sleepy. Not a bad thing he says. But sometimes you sleeping around nine or 10 hours per night. Is that relatively common? Do you think?

Tracey Witty

I suppose I would say to Vladimir, really, if methylcobalamin does suit some people now a nutritional therapist will often sell a supplement rather than say, perhaps try and find injections. And I say that in the kindest possible way that may not be that they really understand that injections are the best way of getting b 12 into the person. So I would suggest that trying b 12 injections might be a really good option there and see if it has the same effect.

Steven Bruce

Okay. He says metal B is that the same thing as methylcobalamin? Is that what is called

Tracey Witty

b 12. Yeah,

Steven Bruce

I see of course, right. Vanessa says is there any research based on B 12 treatment and bipolar depression being resolved?

Tracey Witty

There's masses of research into mental health and B 12 deficiency catatonia and B 12 deficiency. And like I say my own family member had a diagnosis of bipolar, but it was b 12. deficiency. So yeah, and I think, you know, as I said earlier, if you have a mental health diagnosis, you're often pigeonholed and a physical cause may not be ruled out.

Steven Bruce

As fascinating, if so often on these shows, I am reminded, you know, we've done shows on different aspects of health before we've had people on the show talking about mental health. And we've talked about vitamin supplementation, deficiency in other contexts and so on. And I just think sometimes we want to get you all in the room together and put all these thoughts in so we can come up with a single show with a comprehensive diagnosis. Maybe we'll think about that. Once we can get people back in the studio. I wouldn't want to do it via zoom or teams, I'm afraid.

Tracey Witty

There is some brilliant researchers, I think, say Abram Hoffer, who wrote about the term mp3 and schizophrenia. So a lot of the B vitamins are connected to poor mental health in low ranges.

Steven Bruce

James has asked what kind of bowel and bladder symptoms are associated with B 12 deficiency.

Tracey Witty

You could have access diarrhea, you could have constipation. You could have constant need to go to the loo.

Steven Bruce

to urinate to pee. Yeah,

Tracey Witty

yeah. So it affects the nerves and it affects the nerves in all sorts of ways. So it may well be constipation or diarrhea.

Steven Bruce

Right now, you mentioned sorry, Sally portulaca moment ago, and you mentioned the book. Could it be be 12th? Which The answer is obviously, yes. Tell us a bit more about Sally because she's actually produced a

feature film on B 12, which is very watchable. Not because it's the nurse taking on the medical world, isn't it?

Tracey Witty

Yeah, Sally's story is fascinating in that Alyssa Lande was the person who made the film, Sally patch it up, which is based on her life story, although inaccurate in the sense that it's done in a Hollywood way, in that the handsome male doctor finds Sally's deficiency, when in actual fact, Sally discovered her own deficiency. And she first worked as a paramedic and then went on to be a nurse. And Sally discovered her own deficiency, I think she was in her early 20s. And just couldn't believe that nobody knew about it. So she went on to write a book and would always talk to her colleagues and the doctors about Have you checked v 12? Have you checked v 12. And they actually raised an injunction against it and tried to stop her getting her book published. And you can see this played out in the film. So it's a really good start. There's a couple of unfortunate things in the film in the sense that the vegan person there was a vegan person in there who I think she I think she looked she commits suicide. But there's a bit in it, where if they'd have given the vegan person, the oral supplements, rather than the Sorry, I'm spoiling it for people if they want to watch it, but there are some anomalies in the film, which are unfortunate, which could have been done better. And there's also a bit in the film where Sally is shown putting her dad in a home so that they can educate these elderly people in the home about be 12. But Sally did look after her father till he died in her home. I would have been fronted by that if the film had been made about me. Yeah.

Steven Bruce

I think we have to give Hollywood its license so don't we because so so so seldom the real stories find their way onto the onto celluloid accurately. We've got a little bit of time left and I have been asked whether restless legs are also a symptom of B 12 deficiency and I'm gonna guess the answer is going to be Yes, but

Tracey Witty

well, it can be but I would look more towards magnesium deficiency for that.

Steven Bruce

I'm, that's the first time I've heard you say that. It might not be be 12 to a question. It's always be 12.

Tracey Witty

Could be

Steven Bruce

indeed. Jen says does it affect more age groups than others? She has an older gentleman who came to the clinic me today with multiple joints and muscular pain and who was seriously depressed.

Tracey Witty

Yeah. And as we get older, the you know that the fact of the low stomach acid and different levels of drugs and we're aging anyway, then yes, they say that more people over 60 suffer from B 12 deficiency and of course, it does affect men too.

Steven Bruce

Yeah. Okay. I love this question. Kendall says how effective is Marmite? I don't think he's talking about subcutaneous.

Tracey Witty

I don't know how effective Marmite is, but I won't give it my injection for a jar of Marmite.

Steven Bruce

Yeah, I suppose what you said earlier on didn't do that. So you know, if it's a dietary? lack, that's the problem, then diet might be the sword might be the cause. But so often it isn't.

Tracey Witty

Yes, that's the problem.

Steven Bruce

Sophie would like if you've got if you can do it in a couple of minutes to for you to explain the Metformin cause more fully.

Tracey Witty

Well, when you're given Metformin as a diabetic, that affects your it affects something in the stomach. So your inability, then unable to absorb b 12. from food. So, but also with Type One Diabetes, which is autoimmune. Oftentimes, they you know, you collect autoimmune condition. So you might have pernicious anemia as a coexisting deficiency. And the problem is that with diabetic patients, because diabetic neuropathy is looked for, it's often put down to diabetic neuropathy rather than being b 12. deficiency neuropathy caused by either a coexisting punishers anemia, or Metformin, which is stopping the absorption from food.

Steven Bruce

That's really useful stuff to know very useful. I can't get time for this one good time for this one. Richard says, Can you recommend a home testing kits? But I guess you really ought to go back to those labs that we mentioned earlier on, shouldn't he? Yeah, I

Tracey Witty

mean, I really don't have a lot of I've never done that myself. But I heard blue horizons mentioned medic checks, Genova diagnostics. You guys will probably know better than me which testing companies are better. But

Steven Bruce

recommend many checks in the past or they had a good reputation. And I'm sure there'll be lots of others who can come up with other mother lambs. What about transdermal patches? Any good,

Tracey Witty

weird way to get b 12 into the system? It's not known for transdermal. Some people do say, Oh, I have them in between my injections, and I feel better now. I don't know that there's an awful lot of research on these patches. And for a lot of people, it's just money down the drain.

Steven Bruce

Maybe it's nicotine. We come to the end of our schedule time, Tracy, thank you very much that I just wanted to finish up by mentioning again, Sally patch, Alok, PA, ch. o. I, okay. Is the lady who wrote or co authored the book, could it be b 12. I'll send out the links to those. And also to the movie because the movie, it is very watchable. And it's a very nice way of sort of re absorbing a lot of the information that Tracy has given us this evening. Tracy, your website, b 12. b.

Tracey Witty

income info here, and there's a film page on the site. So you can access those videos on the film page, too.

Steven Bruce

Yep. And of course, if you need help with B 12 deficiency with patients or you want to refer your patients and help them I'm sure, Tracy with nothing more than a PhD to keep her busy. We'll be more than delighted to answer all those emails and inquiries. So I introduced you, Tracy, I said you were just a woman because that was what you'd said, a district nurse had called you and I'll leave it to you to judge because clearly there there are very few people certainly in this country who could tell you more about v 12 and Tracy witty. I don't think she needs a PhD in order to convince others but maybe she used the PhD to get a foot through the door of some of the GPS clinics. Tracy, it's been great talking to you. Thank you for coming on the show again. And I'm sure when when you've got your PhD I'd be delighted to get you back and hear how the research went. Great. Okay.