THE JOURNAL OF IMMUNOLOGY

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How stress conditions may influence... even alter nutritional requirements

Because of the relationships of one nutrient to another, the investigator must be constantly alert for stress conditions which arise during or are created by experiments.

For stress conditions can change the requirements for certain nutrients... shading, overshadowing or even distorting the effects of the variable or factor to be studied. Thus, a "chain of events" which adversely influence findings may result.

For example, one effect of an excess amount of fat added to an otherwise balanced diet is to reduce feed intake. This in turn may reduce the intake of one or more critical nutrients. In such a case, it would be difficult to attach the proper significance of poor performance per se to the fat without first correcting the deficiency.

What other stresses should we consider that may be related directly or indirectly to nutrition? The list seems almost endless. But generally, these stresses can be traced, broken down and classified into four major categories: genetic variation; environmental; disease; and post-operative conditions.

Often however, the source or cause of a specific stress is more difficult to identify. All factors which could contribute to it, should be considered. To illustrate, an individual's hormonal system undoubtedly reflects genetic and environmental influences. These in turn may contribute to variations in dietary requirements. The problem can be further complicated by the fact that there are numerous ways that changes in the hormonal system may alter dietary requirements. Each possibility should be considered and explored.

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Held at Hood College, Frederick, Maryland, September 16 and 17, 1959
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