

PELLAGRA

and its prevention and control
in major emergencies

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Pellagra

A disorder due to inadequate dietary intake of niacin and/or tryptophan, manifested by a characteristic dermatitis on areas of the skin that are exposed to the sun, beginning as an erythema with pruritus that may lead to vesiculation but more frequently becomes chronic, rough, scaly, and hard with the formation of crusts as the result of haemorrhage; a broad band of this dermatitis frequently encircles the neck. The digestive tract and nervous system may be involved, with glossitis, stomatitis, gastroenteritis, diarrhoea with profuse watery and sometimes bloody stools, anxiety, depression, tremor, and reduced or absent tendon reflexes; encephalopathy may occur in severe cases. The disease is classically associated with a diet based on non-alkali-treated maize.

Synonyms: alpine scurvy; Casals collar (in part); Casals necklace (in part); chichism; disease of the 3 Ds; elephantiasis asturiensis; elephantiasis italica; erythema endemicum; Lombardy erysipelas; Lefula-pone (Lesotho); mayidism; niacinamidosis; niacin deficiency; pellagra sine pellagra; pseudopellagra (in part); psilosis pigmentosa; St Ignatius itch; typhoid pellagra (in part).

Notes.

1. The term "pseudopellagra" has been applied to pellagra occurring in those whose diet is not based on maize or millet, and "typhoid pellagra" has been applied to pellagra with sustained fever; both terms are deprecated. The typical band of dermatitis encircling the neck has been referred to as Casals collar or necklace (these terms are not recommended). The term "disease of the three

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