[Redoxon as prophylactic for common colds]
[Article in German]
By A. Bendel

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English translation of this paper was kindly arranged by Silvia Maggini from Bayer Consumer Care AG, Basel, Switzerland, in 2016.

This report was translated as background material for the Cochrane review on vitamin C and the common cold by Harri Hemilä and Elizabeth Chalker

Harri.hemila@helsinki.fi
http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/hemila
http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/hemila/VitC_colds.htm
http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/hemila/CC.htm (Cochrane review)
http://www.mv.helsinki.fi/home/hemila/CC (Cochrane review references)

This translation is located at:
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Scanned version of the German paper is located at:
Two groups of 30 junior high school students from Basel between the age of 11 and 14 years spend two weeks of their summer vacation at the holiday home “Morgenholz” near Niederurnen in the Canton Glarus each year. The holiday home is located in a rough mountain valley 977 m above sea level and can only be reached after a strenuous one-hour walk, whereby 550 m difference in height have to be overcome.

This great difference in height in combination with the strain of the steep climb, the romping about of the boys in the fresh air and the great climatic fluctuations in the mountain valley may contribute to the fact that many cases of the cold occurred each year and that the doctor had to treat three to four cases of severe angina per group. This motivated the long-term manager of the colony to look around specifically for suitable therapeutic products against the conspicuously frequent, and in parts serious, cases of the common cold. As general practitioner, I was asked to select the medicinal products. Understandably, I was very interested in preventing even the occurrence of such disease if possible, as I had to set out on that strenuous path several times per week for each serious case of the disease. – In earlier years, all attempts of a prophylaxis failed. Also, the existing, in principle good, anticatarrhals, in parts with synergistic effect, appeared to me to be more suitable for therapy than for prophylaxis due to their quinine and acetylsalicylic acid content, etc. – I remembered the possibility of a prophylaxis with vitamins and when perusing the literature the works of Cuendet and of Scheunert in particular caught my attention.

Cuendet noticed in his studies in the Saas Valley that the nutrition and vitamin supply of the inhabitants is sufficient with the exception of vitamin C and in part vitamin A. The daily amount of vitamin C provided by the food is far below the normal daily requirement. Keratosis pilaris, hemeralopia and dry skin on the one hand and colds and likewise other infectious diseases on the other hand occur especially frequently. In the spring, torpid festering, slow wound healing and excessively long convalescences can be observed. The morbidity of infectious diseases is especially high. – Cuendet showed in his experiments that an additional supply of vitamin C during the months January to March is already sufficient to prevent colds and other infectious diseases almost entirely if children up to two years of age receive one, from two to ten years [receive] two, and persons over the age of ten years [receive] 10 tablets Redoxon 50 mg.

Scheunert, who administered vitamin C prophylactically to 1,066 employees of a large company, obtained similar results. Scheunert thereby made the important observation that only daily doses of 100 to 300 mg vitamin C and greater are able to have a disease-preventing effect, while doses of 20 to 50 mg vitamin C daily have no effect on the incidence of diseases.

Based on these literature references, each resident of the holiday home “Morgenholz” received one tablet Redoxon 200 mg daily during the bad weather summer of 1953 from 9th July until 6th August, so during the period of the notorious poliomyelitis epidemic in the Glarnerland region. To ensure that the prophylaxis was carried out by all students,
I had them take the tablets under observation during breakfast. Despite the threatening situation, not even the slightest sore throat or cough was observed.

From 10th July to 7th August 1954, again a miserable bad weather period, 200 mg Redoxon daily were once more administered to each student. This time again, neither sore throats nor catarrhs of the airways were observed.

Even if the test period is short and the number of test persons is not very large, a positive conclusion can be made nevertheless in my opinion in regard to the prophylactic value of sufficiently high doses of vitamin C considering the special circumstances. This especially applies considering that several children in this region, who did not receive vitamin C, contracted catarrhalic diseases.

Summary
Under administration of 200 mg Redoxon daily to a total of 120 boys aged from 11 to 14 years during respectively two weeks’ vacation in a holiday home in the Glarnerland region, in which colds sometimes of a serious nature were always a daily occurrence, no diseases whatsoever occurred. - The experiments were carried out under especially unfavourable health-related conditions, namely during the bad weather periods of the summers of 1953 (during the notorious poliomyelitis epidemic) and 1954. The incidence of the disease was high in children in the same region who did not receive a vitamin C prophylaxis.

Literature