14. Water-soluble vitamins

C. H. Halsted

VITAMIN C
History
Therapeutic uses and toxicity

Of all the vitamins, ascorbic acid is probably the most controversial because it is claimed, on the basis of in-vitro or animal experimentation but not clinical studies, to have wide-ranging effects. When the double Nobel Prize winner Pauling published his book *Vitamin C and the common cold* (1970) he transformed the public’s attitudes to vitamin C by claiming that large daily doses of vitamin C reduced the likelihood of contracting the common cold. The popularity of this concept prompted at least 14 clinical trials, which failed to show an effect of vitamin C (Chalmers 1975), yet large segments of the population believe that daily vitamin C in amounts far exceeding the RDA is essential to maintain health (Council on Scientific Affairs 1987).

Human Nutrition and Dietetics

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