

## **Study shows multivitamin use by the elderly has "potentially powerful" impact on public health, Medicare expenditures**

A study presented at an October 2003 meeting in Washington, D.C. suggests that daily multivitamin use by older adults is "a relatively inexpensive yet potentially powerful way to improve one's health," and that the health effects from vitamins are particularly important for improving cardiovascular health and immunity. It is recommended that *all* adults but particularly the elderly take a multivitamin supplement daily to help fight off disease and keep the immune system functioning optimally. The savings from costs associated with myocardial infarction-based hospitalizations alone would save more than \$2.4 billion. Another \$924 million would be saved due to a reduction in hospitalizations, nursing home stays and home health care associated with infections. More than \$580 million would be saved in costs related to insurance premiums. The study was conducted by The Lewin Group, an internationally known consulting firm, on behalf of Wyeth Consumer Healthcare, October 2003

## **High Rates Of Caesarean Delivery May Harm Mothers And Newborns**

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High rates of caesarean delivery in Latin America can be associated with a greater risk of maternal and newborn illness and death, report the authors of a paper published online by *The Lancet* (Tuesday May 23, 2006).

Caesarean delivery rates are increasing worldwide. During 2005, Jose Villar (World Health Organization) and colleagues assessed the association between rates of caesarean delivery and maternal and newborn outcomes in hospitals in Latin America. 120 public, private, and social security hospitals from 24 geographic regions in eight countries in Latin America were randomly selected for inclusion in the study (91% of the population were served by these hospitals). The investigators analysed over 97 000 deliveries. They found that hospitals with high rates of caesarean delivery had higher rates of severe maternal illness, death, and antibiotic treatment post pregnancy, even after they adjusted for risk factors such as the characteristics of the women, referrals, and the type of hospital. They also found that rates of preterm delivery and newborn deaths rose with the increasing rates of caesarean delivery of between 10% and 20%.

Dr Villar states: "In conclusion, high rates of caesarean delivery do not necessarily indicate good quality care or services. Indeed institutions that deliver a lot of babies by caesarean should initiate a detailed and rigorous assessment of the factors related to their obstetric care and the perinatal outcomes achieved vis-à-vis the case mix of the population they serve; at present their services might cause iatrogenic harm."

*Iatrogenic means doctor-related*

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