Vitamin D: How Rickets Shaped Nutritional Science

written by Dr. Ronald Hoffman | March 25, 2025

The Long Shadow of Rickets: Vitamin D, Historical Insights, and Modern Implications. Dr. Chris Warren, a history professor at Brooklyn College delves into the origins and prevalence of rickets, a condition now largely unknown but once widespread. Dr. Warren explains the factors contributing to rickets, particularly Vitamin D deficiency, and shares insights from his book, “Starved for Light: The Long Shadow of Rickets and Vitamin D Deficiency.” The discussion covers socioeconomic, industrial, and environmental aspects, along with the relevance of cod liver oil, sunlight exposure, and the evolution of Vitamin D synthesis. There are also reflections on modern implications of Vitamin D deficiency and racial differences in processing Vitamin D. The episode concludes with a look at how historical medical practices around rickets influenced today’s medical norms and practices.