

Joseph Goldberger Encyclopedia Article

Joseph Goldberger

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Joseph Goldberger

1874-1929

American physician and epidemiologist who is best known for demonstrating that pellagra is a nutritional deficiency disease. Pellagra is characterized by dermatitis, diarrhea, and dementia. The disease was endemic in areas where the diet was based almost exclusively on corn. Goldberger proved that the disease could be cured and prevented by enriching the diet with milk, eggs, or meat. Eventually, scientists discovered that pellagra is caused by a deficiency of niacin, a member of the vitamin B complex. Goldberger's research also included studies of yellow fever, typhoid fever, dengue fever, typhus fever, and diphtheria.