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**BIOLOGY**

**Marine Fungus Needs Vitamin B-12 to Live**

► DISCOVERY of a marine fungus that needs vitamin B-12 to live may provide scientists with an important research tool—a way to measure how much of this important vitamin is contained in sea water.

This is the first report of a fungus known to need an outside source of B-12.

Drs. Elizabeth J. Adair and Helen S. Vishniac, department of microbiology at Yale University, report in *Science* (Jan. 17) that *Thraustochytrium globosum* should make a good “assay organism” for two reasons. It has a shorter incubation period than the best organism now being used and it does not respond to pseudovitamin B-12 or some other factors that complicated earlier analyses of sea water.

Experiments designed to test the vitamin B-12 requirement of the marine fungus showed greater growth accompanying greater amounts of the vitamin. Subsequent use of the organism to evaluate B-12 content of sea water was successful, the scientists report. In fact, higher levels of the vitamin were found than had been reported in other tests.

Their vitamin B-12 requirement places the marine fungus in the same group of organisms as the bacteria, algae and animals. Higher plants neither require nor produce the vitamin.

Science News Letter, February 1, 1958

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