Which is better to fight blindness — Golden Rice or Vitamin A supplement pills?

The story of Golden Rice did not begin last year, however, but more than 20 years ago with the idea of a German-Swiss research team. Two biologists, Ingo Potrykus and Peter Beyer, wanted to use green genetic engineering to develop an effective remedy for [Vitamin A deficiency, or] VAD for countries in Asia where rice is the staple food. They hoped for nothing less than to be able to save millions of lives.

Normal rice does not naturally produce beta-carotene, which can be converted into vitamin A by the human body.

The Indian ecologist Debal Deb points out that any amount of vitamin A — whether in a tablet or in Golden Rice — cannot solve the VAD problem, if the consumer’s diet is deficient in zinc and lipids, and if the consumer has diarrhea or dysentery from unsafe drinking water.

Existing studies that claim its effectiveness as a source of vitamin A involve healthy persons, if not simulated in ideal scenarios, conditions that don’t need intervention with Malusog Rice.

Golden Rice has come a long way... but whether it can at least make a decisive contribution against malnutrition and VAD will only become clear once reliable data has been collected through the pilot project.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here