A patient undergoes a TATT screen and is shown to have folic acid and vitamin B12 deficiency. You remember that folic acid should be replaced AFTER the vitamin B12 supplementation has started due to risk of:

A) Liver damage  
B) Neurological damage  
C) Bone marrow hyperplasia  
D) Bone marrow failure  
E) Impaired clotting

#fearsomefive

Answer Tomorrow:

MCQ / ClinicalKey AnswerCard

Answer - Neurological damage

When dealing with a macrocytic anaemia, it is vital that both the folic acid level and B12 level is checked, as if folic acid is given to patient with an undiagnosed deficiency of vitamin B12, the influx of folic acid will lead to correction of the macrocytic anaemia, but utilise remaining B12 levels. This in turn will reduce the B12 level further putting the patient at risk of neurological damage – specifically subacute combined degeneration of the spinal cord (Lichtheim’s disease)

ClinicalKey Link