

DC Online (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

More Fish for the Heart

A new study of nearly 85,000 women supports previous studies that concluded that a regular dietary intake of fish helps prevent cardiovascular problems. A 30 percent reduction in heart disease was seen among women who ate fish two to four times per week, compared to those who consumed it rarely.¹ The benefits are generally ascribed to fish oil's omega-3 fatty acid content. The findings described by this and other studies include reduction of ischemic strokes, sudden heart failure, irregular heartbeat, and heart attacks. According to this study, taking "an-aspirin-a-day" is apparently statistically inferior to eating more fish.²

1. *JAMA*, April 10, 2002.
 2. Associated Press, April 9, 2002.
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New Pesticides, New Problems

A generation of new pesticides, developed in response to problems with the safety of earlier compounds, is raising concerns of its own. One ingredient, called "tryphenltin," to reduce the immune response of human tumor killer cells by up to 60 percent appears after only a one-hour exposure. In one study, the function of these cells did not return for six days.³

3. Margaret Whalen of Tennessee State University in Nashville, reporting to the American Chemical Society conference in Orlando, April 9, 2002.
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Cancer Protection from Sunlight

The *journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine*⁴ reports that death rates from some types of cancer (but not skin cancer) are significantly lower in sunnier states. The cancers that were less prevalent in sunny climates were the colon, breast, prostate, and ovarian varieties. People who worked outdoors were also less likely to die from breast and colon cancer. The study spanned 12 years and 24 U.S. states. The researchers suspect that vitamin D slows cell division, thereby making cancers less aggressive and easier for the body to control.

4. *OEM*, April 2002.
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Heart Failure Medication Problems

A drug commonly used to treat patients with acute congestive heart failure may cause some very dangerous side-effects, and should probably be used only as a last resort, according to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.⁵ The drug, milrinone, was shown to cause an drop in blood pressure and irregular heartbeats in patients who were not as ill as those typically given the medication. Long-term oral use of the drug is associated with increased hospitalizations and death, according to the manufacturer's website.⁶

5. *JAMA*, March 27, 2002.

6. *Associated Press*, March 2, 2002.

Coffee and Blood Pressure

A study from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine reports that coffee plays a very minor, if not insignificant, role in high blood pressure. According to this 33-year study of 1,000 medical students, no dose-dependent relationship between coffee and hypertension can be drawn. The study did find a slightly higher rate when comparing coffee drinkers to total abstainers, but not enough to make it a major risk factor, contrary to long-held medical belief.⁷

7. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, March 25, 2002.

TV-Related Violence

A study from Columbia University in New York suggests that as little as one hour of television viewing each day by children, especially boys, increases their propensity toward violent behavior as they become older. The study followed 707 children, who were between one and 10 years old when the study began, for the next 17 years of their lives. Television viewing habits and violent acts against other people, including arrest records, were tabulated.

Researchers found a rather dramatic delimitation between those who averaged more than one hour per day of television, who were four times as likely to be involved in violence, and those who spent less than one hour per day in front of the set. The researchers note that an average hour of television portrays three to five acts of violence. They contend that this leads to a desensitization and acceptance of such acts.⁸

8. *Science*, March 29, 2002.

Termite Control

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that it has found one bacterium and two fungi that can decimate a colony of Formosan subterranean termites within a week. The microbes do not appear to affect humans or plants. The germs attach to the insects' bodies, and are quickly spread through casual contact. The findings may lead to a more ecologically safe way to control termites.⁹

9. Reuters, April 11, 2002, reporting on the work of Maureen Wright of the USDA.

Birth Control Cancer

A study conducted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a division of the World Health Organization, reports that long-term use of birth control pills appears to be related to the incidence of cervical cancer. They found a threefold increase in cancer rates among women who were infected with the human papilloma virus and who had taken the pill for five years or more. The risk increases to four times if women have been taking it for 10 or more years. The pill doesn't appear to raise the chances of a woman being a carrier of HPV; it just somehow seems to allow it to have a greater impact in carcinogenesis.¹⁰

10. *The Lancet*, March 30, 2002.

Polio Infections

In the 1980s, polio was declared eradicated from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Unfortunately, cases have resurged again: During 2000, 21 cases were reported in these two countries. The Centers for Disease Control and the Pan American Health Organization investigated the outbreak, and have recently reported their findings. The cause, they say, is the live oral vaccine given prophylactically. The authors of the report¹¹ suggest that the outbreak was the result of a low immunization rate (less than 40 percent), where those who had been inoculated spread the infection to unprotected children. However, at least eight (and probably more, but undetermined due to incomplete recordkeeping) had received at least one dose of the vaccine, and one was considered to have had a complete three-dose regimen.

11. *Science*, March 14, 2002.

Transplanting Parasites

A study released by the Centers for Disease Control details the cases of three transplant patients who contracted a parasitic infection previously restricted to Latin America. The patients received the pancreas, liver, and kidneys from a deceased Central American immigrant who had been infected with *T. cruzi*, the agent behind Chagas disease. All but one died from the infection. Officials are considering tightening screening procedures for organ transplants to include such organisms. Currently, even blood donors aren't screened for this infestation. It is estimated that about 100,000 immigrants in the United States are carriers.¹²

12. Associated Press, March 15, 2002.

Bacteria-laden Tissue Grafts

Another CDC study has found 26 cases of bacterial infections traced to tissues taken from cadavers and grafted to patients during a variety of surgical procedures. The study was launched when a 23-year-old Minnesota man died from infected tissue received during knee surgery. A 17-year-old boy became ill after receiving grafts culled from the same donor. About half of the 26 cases involved

tissues provided by the same biotech supplier. The CDC is formulating recommendations to help prevent the implantation of such rotting tissues into surgical patients in the future.¹³

13. Associated Press, March 15, 2002.

Prozac/Cancer Link

British researchers report that test-tube studies suggest that certain antidepressant drugs, such as those used in Prozac, Paxil and Celexa, may interfere with the body's ability to kill some types of tumor cells. Professor John Gordon, of the University of Birmingham, found that serotonin causes cells involved with Burkitt's lymphoma to self-destruct. However, this action is blocked by selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), the main ingredient of the most popular prescription antidepressants. Professor Gordon's work also has implications in the area of mind/body immunological actions, perhaps suggesting how a "positive mental attitude" can affect the course of some types of cancer.¹⁴

14. www.bloodjournal.org/cgi/content/abstract/99/7/2545.

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