

DC Online

Brian Sutton, DC

New Antibiotic Already Becoming Ineffective

Researchers from the University of Illinois report that one of the newest antibiotics is quickly becoming ineffective against the bacteria infections for which it was approved. The study involved only five hospitalized patients taking the drug, but even so, the findings are alarming many people. Attending physicians gradually saw the medication of three of their patients, who initially responded to treatment, become ineffective as the treatment progressed. Linezolid (brand name Zyvox) is a new class of antibiotic that suppresses synthesis of certain proteins. The patients were already resistant to vancomycin, the previous "antibiotic of last resort."¹

1. The *Lancet*, April 14, 2001.

Suicide Rates Higher for Female Health Professionals

Researchers from the University of Oxford report that female health professionals are much more likely to commit suicide than their male counterparts or the general population. The highest rate was among female anesthesiologists, who killed themselves seven times more frequently than the average citizen. The rates were also high for female psychiatrists and family practitioners. Male physician suicide rates were more in line with, and often lower than, that of the general population. The numbers were drawn from a study of death certificates of members of Britain's National Health Service. The study did not reach any conclusions as to the reason for the findings.²

2. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, April 2001.

Sedentary Cancers

A report from the World Health Organization³ cites obesity and lack of exercise as a major factor in up to one third of cases of cancer of the colon, breast, kidney, and digestive tract. The report advocates active weight loss among persons with a body mass index above 25, though few studies have been done to indicate whether or not persons who lose weight also reverse their risk.

3. <http://www.iarc.fr/pageroot/UNITS/Chemoprevention2.html>, <http://www.iotf.org>

IQ and Longevity

A study published in the *British Medical Journal*⁴ suggests, perhaps not surprisingly, that the

lifespan of an individual is related to that person's intelligence quotient as a child. The study is based on the results of 2,230 Scottish children given a national intelligence test in 1932. Children with an IQ of 85 were only 63 percent as likely to survive until 1997, compared to those who scored 115. The correlation was stronger for females than males, perhaps skewed by combat deaths during World War Two. The researchers say that more study is needed to explain the reasons why intelligent persons live longer, but suggest explanations - from genetic and environmental problems that might have stunted a child's IQ (and subsequent development) - to lifestyle and career choices.

4. *BMJ*, April 7, 2001.

Zinc Supplementation during Pregnancy

A study of 420 Bangladesh infants suggests that mothers who have an adequate supply of zinc in their diets during pregnancy produce healthier babies. More than 40 percent of the babies in this study had low birth weight, suggesting nonoptimal nutrition, and zinc did not appear to make a difference in birth weight. But babies from zinc-supplemented pregnancies had 32 percent less diarrhea,⁵ a 61 percent less incidence of impetigo, and 74 percent less dysentery.⁶

5. [http://www.babyworld.co.uk/news/Apr01/100201zinchoosts growth.html](http://www.babyworld.co.uk/news/Apr01/100201zinchoosts%20growth.html)

6. *The Lancet*, April 7, 2001.

Eczema and Yogurt

Another study published in the *Lancet*⁷ suggests that prenatal and six-month postnatal supplementation of lactobacillus Gorbach Goldin (LGG) can significantly reduce incidence of eczema in the offspring. This was a double-blind study of 132 pregnancies and subsequent births. The babies were checked for a diagnosis of eczema at age two. The rate of eczema in the lactobacillus group was half that of those given placebos. These children were all considered high risk, as a close relative had been diagnosed with eczema. The lactobacillus was given in the form of capsules.

7. *The Lancet*, April 7, 2001.

Peanuts in Breast Milk

Canadian researchers⁸ report finding peanut proteins in breast milk in about half of the lactating mothers they treated. All mothers had eaten peanuts within the past two to six hours. There has been a suspicion for some time that peanut allergies are formed at a very young age in susceptible individuals. This research suggests that if this is possible, nursing mothers may want to avoid peanuts. Peanut allergies affect about one percent of the preschool population. Concerned physicians often discourage patients from giving their children peanut products until the age of three.⁹

8. *JAMA*, April 5, 2001.

9. Reuters, April 4, 2001.

More Peanuts

According to a recent statement by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration,¹⁰ people may be eating a lot more peanut products than they think. Inspectors tested ice cream, cookies, and candy that did not list peanuts as an ingredient, but found traces of them in about one of every four samples. The 73 samples came from various producers in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Ten percent contained undeclared egg protein. Investigation suggests that the main source for peanut derivatives is inadequately cleaned cooking equipment and utensils.

10. Reuters, April 3, 2001.

Antibiotics for Sinusitis

A new study¹¹ of 161 children with acute sinusitis concludes that antibiotics are not an effective treatment. Current medical guidelines recommend antibiotic therapy when systems persist, an unproven course of treatment that apparently is pointless, according to this report. This placebo-controlled study examined the effects of two weeks of treatment on overall symptom resolution; duration of symptoms; recovery to usual functional status; days missed from school or child care; and relapse and recurrence of sinus symptoms.¹² There was no difference between the two groups. These results are in line with similar studies done on adults.

11. *Pediatrics*, April 2001.

12. Associated Press, April 2, 2001.

Return of Rickets

A report in the journal *Pediatrics*¹³ concludes that childhood cases of rickets are on the rise again. The problem, resolved in the 1930s by adding vitamin D to milk, is making a comeback, probably because children are not getting enough sunlight. Officials suggest the problem is arising probably from a combination of increased use of indoor day care facilities, fears about skin cancer from the sun, milk substitutes (with no vitamin-D supplementation), and longer working hours for parents who then only take their children outdoors on the weekends. The problem is seen most often in black, breast-fed babies. Dark-skinned individuals convert less sunlight to vitamin D.

13. *Pediatrics*, April 2001.

Keep Moving

The journal *Nature*¹⁴ reports that intensive bouts of exercise may not be the most reliable type of exercise for a person trying to lose weight. If you want to raise your basal metabolic rate, and therefore burn more energy all day and night, this study says your best bet is to keep moving

throughout the day, even if your activity is of low intensity. The best gauge of what will work seems to be the brevity of sedentary time between activity, which can be quite mild and still effective. Such activities can include walking, bicycling, climbing stairs between television commercials, or maybe (as previous studies have suggested) fidgeting.

14. *Nature*, April 7, 2001.

Anti-Depressive Exercise

According to researchers at the Freie Universität in Berlin, Germany, there is a better way to beat severe depression than by using many drugs now on the market: exercise. They say that 30 minutes each day on a treadmill produced faster and better mood improvements than typically used drug treatments. Most drug therapies take from two to four weeks to show an effect. This small study of 12 patients with severe depression found that 10 days of exercise significantly improved the mental outlook of most patients, including five who had not responded to previous drug therapy.¹⁵

15. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, April 1, 2001.

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