

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

Smoking for Breast Cancer

A new study sponsored by the World Health Organization concludes that cigarette smoking may decrease the risk of breast cancer in certain women. The study¹ examined women who were more at risk for the disease because of a genetic weakness and found that the smokers developed breast cancer at half the rate of non-smokers. Researchers were both "surprised and dismayed"² with the results. They worry that tobacco companies will try to exploit these findings, presumably before some kind of tobacco-derived drug can be developed.

1. Published in May's Journal of the American Cancer Society.
 2. "Surprise finding -- smoking may prevent breast cancer." Reuter, May 19, 1998.
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Tooth Coating Stunts Sexual Development

Researchers at the University of Missouri report that a coating used by dentists to protect tooth enamel contains a component that appears to disrupt normal development of male sex organs.³ Bisphenol A mimics the action of estrogen in the body, in this case amplifying such action. The study looked at the effects of ingestion of the chemical by pregnant females on their newborns. Some of the doses used in the study were equivalent to the amounts a human patient might swallow in the first hour after a dental treatment, according to the authors.

3. New Scientist, May 13, 1998.
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Vitamin C Hazard

Chemical pathologists at the University of Leicester warn that too much vitamin C may be hazardous to your health. In a small, six-week study,⁴ researchers found that more than 500 milligrams per day may convert the adenine bases of DNA to oxoadenine, which can have detrimental effects. Earlier work at New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine⁵ suggests that large doses may also convert iron to a form that can harm the heart and other organs.⁶

4. Nature, April 1998.
 5. Led by Dr. Victor Herbert.
 6. United Press, April 9, 1998.
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Musky Perfumes Amplify Gene Damage

Physicians at the University of Heidelberg Hospital in Germany report that certain types of musk-containing perfumes seem to promote genetic damage. In their tests on liver cells, they have found that fragrances included in the "musk nitros" family interact with airborne pollutants to amplify gene damage. They caution perfume salespersons against spraying these compounds into the air they breathe throughout the day.⁷

7. Reported to the World Congress of Health and Urban Environment in Madrid by Dr. Volker Mersch-Sundermann, July, 1998.

Iron Guidelines Released

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released guidelines on dietary iron for women and children. According to the CDC, women of childbearing age and adolescent girls should get 15 milligrams per day through their diet. This means that currently 75 percent of this group has an iron deficiency. About nine percent of children under three years of age are deficient in the mineral.⁸

8. Reuter, April 2, 1998.

Learning Violence

Research at Case Western Reserve University recently set out to find out if, and to what extent, an adolescent's psyche is influenced by violent behavior in his environment. After studying more than 3,700 children, ages 14-19, they report that the link is both "striking and obvious."⁹ Teens exposed to physical or verbal trauma at home are much more likely to be chronically angry and act violently themselves, according to this study. Violence is rising dramatically among teenagers: 17% of teenage boys in this study report to have tried to shoot someone during the past year.

Researchers were able to correlate seemingly mild incidents such as occasional slapping or violent, crude language usage around the children to permanent personality changes. Such actions by parents, other adults or other children all proved significant. The authors report that real-life trauma causes psychological scars most readily, but this study puts much blame for the bulk of violent behavior on television.

9. United Press, June 14, 1998.

Zinc Ineffective for Cold Symptoms

A new study of the effectiveness of zinc lozenges in children concludes that the mineral has no effect on the course or severity of the common cold. The study examined 249 students at two school districts in Ohio. Students were given zinc lozenges or a similar placebo without zinc for three weeks. No significant differences were observed between the two groups. The students were selected for the study from grades one through twelve.¹⁰

10. *JAMA*, June 24, 1998.

Zinc Effective for Cold Symptoms

Another new study of the effectiveness of zinc supplements in children concludes that the mineral has a significant positive effect on the course of the common cold. Researchers studied 609 children in India, ages six months to three years, and found that those taking a daily zinc supplement suffered half as many acute respiratory infections as the control group. The study was done by researchers at the Indian Council for Medical Research in New Delhi and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.¹¹

11. Pediatrics, July 1998.

Nicotine Withdrawal Risks

British doctors have discovered another symptom of nicotine withdrawal: an increase in accidents at work. Upon examining workplace safety records, they discovered that on National "No Smoking Day," there was a significant increase in such accidents. Irritability and lack of concentration are thought to be the most likely contributors.¹²

12. Nature, July 1998, reporting on the work of Andrew Waters, et al.

Heartburn Drug Warning

The FDA has issued a warning about a drug commonly used for the treatment of night-time heartburn. Cisapride (also known as Propulsid) is believed to have caused at least 38 deaths from cardiac side-effects. The drug is also thought to interact unfavorably with a number of other drugs, and there is a long list of physiological illnesses that preclude its use. The manufacturer plans to send a letter to doctors asking them to use caution when prescribing the preparation.¹³

13. United Press, July 6, 1998.

Copper for E. Coli

British doctors report that when at least one harmful strain of e. coli bacteria comes into contact with copper surfaces, it dies within hours. Further studies are planned to test the effectiveness of copper counter tops in food preparation, and whether copper water pipes decrease the risk of water-borne contamination.¹⁴

14. United Press, July 6, 1998.

Camera-Shy Doctors

If you're looking forward to capturing the birth of your next child on videotape, consider that

hospital administrators and obstetricians are increasingly more likely to ban video cameras from delivery rooms. Malpractice insurers are urging that cameras be prohibited because of the increasing number of malpractice cases being won because of videotaped evidence.

Informal surveys seem to indicate that more and more patients are indeed being told to leave the cameras at home. Attorneys on the other side contend that the films merely expose the truth and can break what is often described as a courtroom "swearing contest" between hospital staff and patients.¹⁵

15. Associated Press, June 18, 1998.

Brian Sutton, DC
Colorado Springs, Colorado
BSuttonDC-aol.com
73160.676-compuserve.com

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