

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

U.S. Diets Score Poorly

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americans perform badly when it comes to healthful eating. If graded on the A-F scale used in most schools, U.S. citizens would receive a "D"; maybe even a "D-minus." The under secretary for food, nutrition, and consumer services¹ says that less than one-third of the population consumes recommended levels of dairy and meat products. Eighty percent do not eat enough grains, fruits, and vegetables.²

1. Ellen Haas of the USDA.
2. United Press, July 19, 1996, reporting on the Healthy Eating Index.

Exercise Degenerative Joints

An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*³ says that regular exercise can increase mobility and decrease the pain of osteoarthritis. This study examined exercise's effect on 439 people with knee degeneration. The authors concluded that both aerobic exercise and weight training were safe and effective means of treatment. Volunteers worked out three times per week for 18 months, while a control group listened to health lectures.

3. *JAMA*, Jan. 1, 1997.

Winter Pressures

A study published in the *American Journal of Hypertension*⁴ finds that about one-third of thin men can expect their systolic blood pressure to rise at least 10 points during the winter. The researchers think that it would be prudent to take the season into account when evaluating such patients. Heavier men did not seem to be affected significantly.

4. *AJH*, December, 1996.

Unconstitutional Research

A New York State appeals court has ruled that psychiatric experiments on some patients are unconstitutional. Patients who are too young or mentally ill to give legal consent were being subjected to experiments based on the consent of "surrogates" such as friends, family members, or other nonlegal guardians. The ruling forced the cancellation of a number of research studies,

including one that used spinal taps to monitor neurochemistry in suicidal teenagers.⁵

5. Associated Press, reporting on the Dec. 5, 1996 ruling by the New York Appellate court.

Leukemia Linked to Nuclear Plant

French scientists studying residents of an area near a nuclear power plant in Normandy report an increase in leukemia in residents. They say that children who played regularly on the beach there were three times more likely to suffer from the disorder. The risk was also higher for people who consumed the local seafood at least once a week.⁶

6. *British Medical Journal*, January 11, 1997.

Arm Waving Signals Heart Problems

A study in the *British Medical Journal*⁷ concludes that people with coronary artery disease are more likely to use pronounced arm gestures when communicating with other people. This small study of 50 people noted the movements during a 10-minute interview that posed standard questions about the subjects' lifestyle and health. The researchers do not know what the relationship is, nor even if heart disease leads to greater animation or vice versa.

7. *BMJ*, January 11, 1997.

Cancer Transplant

A 58 year-old man given a new heart also received something a little extra in the process: prostatic carcinoma. In 1994 the patient received the heart from a man who had recently died of a brain hemorrhage. While "harvesting" other organs from the dead man's body, doctors discovered cancer cells in the lymphatic system. Ten months later, the recipient was found to have a tumor on his rib cage containing metastatic prostate cells. A subsequent examination of his own prostate showed no signs of disease. The doctor reporting this event goes on to say that examining transplanted organs for such problems is not justified by the cost-benefit ratio.⁸

8. *JAMA*, January 8, 1996.

Drunk Driving Increases

A survey of 102,000 people finds that more people are driving under the influence of alcohol than experts had suspected. While automobile-related deaths attributed to drunk driving have declined in recent years, the researchers say that Americans are still driving drunk 123 million times each year. A typical drunk can get behind the wheel 82 times before he is caught. About 17,000 people die each year in the United States in alcohol-related accidents.⁹

9. United Press, January 7, 1997.

Decreased Natural Immunity Increases Asthma

A report in the journal *Science* proposes that one reason for the increase in asthma and some allergic reactions seen in recent years is that children have not been contracting as many of the normal childhood illnesses. Something about being exposed to and developing a natural immunity to respiratory ailments seems to offer some protection against future problems. According to the authors, "Childhood infections may, therefore, paradoxically protect against asthma."¹⁰ The study involved nearly 1,000 children.

10. *Science*, January, 1997.

Work Yourself to Sleep

A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*¹¹ suggests that older adults will sleep better if they're on a moderate exercise program. Researchers found a significant improvement in sleeping patterns when the patients exercised 30-40 minutes, four days each week. They also fell asleep in half the time, compared to nonexercisers. The exercise program was as mild as brisk walking.

11. *JAMA*, January 1, 1997.

Grapes for Cancer

Researchers conducting experiments on mice and cell cultures report that they have found a substance in grapes that shows much promise as an anti-carcinogen. The compound, called resveratrol, appears to have a three-way action, with protective benefits for DNA damage, cell metaplasia, and during tumor growth. The results are preliminary, but researchers are very excited about the findings. The compound is most prevalent in red grape varieties, but is also found in peanuts, mulberries, and a number of other plants.¹²

12. *Science*, January 10, 1996.

Dietary Links to Asthma

Researchers from the University of Sydney, Australia, report that children seem to have a higher risk of reactive airway disease, such as asthma, when consuming diets high in sugar and fat. They discovered that those with hyper-responsive airways took in 25 percent more fat and sugar in this study of 213 subjects. Large amounts of salt also appeared to be detrimental. However, children whose diets consisted of generous amounts of fish oils had half the risk factor of other children.¹³

13. Presented to the annual international conference of the American Thoracic Society by Dr. Anne Woolcock.

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FEBRUARY 1997