Dynamic Chiropractic

HEALTH & WELLNESS / LIFESTYLE

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

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Send the Babies Home

A study of almost 35,000 newborns finds that the risk of jaundice is not enough to routinely keep an infant in the hospital. Contrary to the fears of many physicians, severe cases of jaundice did not increase when infants were discharged from the hospital within 24 hours of birth. The research was done at the University of California, San Francisco.[1] Jaundice is normally treated by exposure to ultraviolet light.

1. Research was led by Dr. Thomas Newman of UCSF, reported by United Press, May 23, 1997.

Breast Feeding and Pregnancy Don't Hurt Bones

The findings of British researchers who studied new mothers recently should help calm the fears of women worried about osteoporosis. Their study concludes that pregnancy and breast feeding are no reason to worry about osteoporosis later in life. The doctors measured bone densities in women for a number of years before and after weaning their children. They found that while some did lose bone calcium while nursing, it was later replaced when there was more available in the mother's system.[2] Many people, doctors included, seem to have trouble grasping the concept that osteoporosis is due to a loss of bone substrate, while a simple loss of calcium would cause the bones to soften, as in osteomalacia.

2. *The Lancet*, May 24, 1997.

Canadian vs. American Heart Patients

A new study of heart attack mortality suggests that bypass surgeries and angioplasties may not offer any significant benefit to patients. This study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*,[3] compares Canadian heart attack victims to patients in the United States. While U.S. citizens undergo the high-tech procedures eight times as often, there is no difference in survival rates a year later. The research looked at more than 233,000 patients.

3. *NEJM*, May 22, 1997.

Food on the Brain

A group of doctors from Geneva[4] have described a rare benign eating disorder linked with damage

to the right hemisphere of the brain.

Neurologist Theodor Landis of the University of Geneva has dubbed it the "gourmand syndrome," for the French word that describes a person who heartily enjoys good food and drink (as opposed to an epicure or gourmet who is a connoisseur).

One patient, a political journalist, turned to writing columns on dining after a stoke to the right front part of his brain. Another stoke victim, who had a hemorrhage on the right side of the brain, became so obsessed with fine food that he couldn't stop talking about it.

4. Neurology, May, 1997.

Obesity Doubles Stroke Risk

A study at Brigham and Women's Hospital concludes that excess weight has a significant impact on stroke incidence. Researchers looked at the amount of weight women gained since they were 18 years old and found that strokes increased proportionally as the weight went up. Women who gained more than 44 pounds were stricken 2.5 times as frequently. More than 115,000 women participated in the study.[5]

5. *JAMA*, May 21, 1997.

Vitamins for Asthma

Research at the Washington School of Public Health in Seattle suggests that a combination of vitamins C and E may be beneficial for some asthma patients. This placebo-controlled study compared the results of a 5-week regimen with patients exercising in a polluted environment. They found that breathing was easier after the vitamin supplementation than it was for the same patients when their vitamins were later substituted by placebos during a second 5-week test.[6]

6. Presented to the American Lung Association and American Thoracic Society's International Conference in San Francisco, May 20, 1997, by Dr. Carol Trenga.

Exercise and Colds

Researchers at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana were curious about how the common cold might affect an athlete's physical performance. They recruited 55 students, aged 18 to 29 and in moderately good condition, to workout on a treadmill until they tired. Then they introduced high doses of a rhinovirus into one group of the volunteers. When the inoculated students became ill with head colds, they again repeated the treadmill tests on both groups. The researchers were surprised to find that the ill volunteers did just as well, in fact better than the non-symptomatic group. Those with the colds also said that the exercise seemed no harder than it did when they felt healthier.[7]

7. Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, May 1997.

Questioning the Evils of Salt

Another bit of medical dogma is being challenged by scientists, this time by a Canadian researcher from Toronto's Mt. Sinai Hospital. He analyzed 56 studies and concluded that sodium intake has no significant effect on a person's blood pressure. In fact, he found a number of adverse consequences of restricting salt intake, including cholesterol problems and disturbed calcium metabolism. Many doctors have long assumed, incorrectly according to this study, that restricting sodium intake would decrease blood pressure or that higher amounts of dietary salt would lead to hypertension later in life.[8]

8. Dr. Alexander Logan, in a presentation to the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Hypertension in San Francisco, May 30, 1997.

Lick Your Wounds

British researchers have finally found a scientific benefit to the practice of licking one's wounds, as is often observed in dogs and other animals. Using human volunteers, they found that saliva contains substances that form nitric oxide when it comes in contact with the skin. One group licked their hands while another washed in saline solution during the study; then the researchers checked the skin surface. Nitric oxide, an antiseptic, was 10 times higher on the licking group's hands.[9]

9. *The Lancet*, June 14, 1997.

Thunderstorms Increase Asthma Attacks

Another danger to asthma sufferers has been isolated: thunderstorms. Researchers from the National Heart Institute in London and Cambridge University analyzed emergency calls and found that during a severe thunderstorm, calls relating to asthma attacks increased four-fold. They theorize that the storms somehow break pollen into smaller particles that cause more airway irritation.[10]

10. Reuter, June 10, 1997, reporting on the work of Katherine Venables of the NHI and Jonathan Higham of Cambridge University's Institute of Public Health.

Gum Disease and the Heart

A number of researchers are examining the relationship between gum disease and overall health, especially relating to the heart. The hypothesis is that chronic infections in the gums can lead to bacteria spreading throughout the cardiovascular system. Some studies seem to bear out this contention. One study of 1200 men found a doubled risk of death when gum disease was present. A second study that lasted seventeen years found that men who had signs of gum disease before they were 50 years old were dying from heart disease at a 75 percent higher rate by the time the study ended.[11]

11. Associated Press, June 7, 1997, reporting on a presentation by Raul Garcia, DDS, of the VA Outpatient Clinic in Boston at a conference at the University of North Carolina.

Malaria Risks

A rather paradoxical conclusion is being drawn from malaria research in Kenya. Researchers there are finding that children exposed to the disease at a young age seem to fare better if the disease is more prevalent in their community. When incidence of malaria infection is high, the number of children admitted to hospitals with severe symptoms are quite lower than in communities with only a moderate number of cases. The risk of dying from the illness, once contracted, is also less if the patient lives in an area where malaria is rampant.[12]

12. *The Lancet*, June 7, 1997.

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