

## DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

### Antibiotic Quacks

A new study by researchers at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver concludes that most medical doctors are aware that antibiotics are useless for colds and other upper respiratory infections, but still prescribe them anyway, even though such reckless uses are responsible for the proliferation of resistant super-germs. The justification for these 12 million wasted prescriptions each year is that the doctor thinks the patient expects an antibiotic, or patients, who aren't informed that they have no value in such situations, simply demand them from their doctors. I wonder what would happen if they were to "demand" rational health care?

It is estimated that 21 percent of all antibiotic prescriptions given to patients are useless<sup>1</sup> (or worse). I think that translates into a very large number of quacks preying on unsuspecting patients.

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, September 17, 1997.

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### Broccoli Sprouts

Research just a couple of years ago identified a compound present in broccoli, cauliflower, and other vegetables that exhibits a protective effect against some types of cancer. Sulforaphane (extracted from broccoli) reduced cancer formation in laboratory animals by as much as 80 percent. Unfortunately, the amount required to cause a similar effect in humans is about two pounds of the green vegetable each week. Now a new study at Johns Hopkins University reveals that three-day old broccoli sprouts contain up to 50 times the sulforaphane of the adult variety. And some people will be gratified to know that the taste is quite different as well. Broccoli sprouts look much like alfalfa sprouts, but are said to be more flavorful, without the sharp, tangy taste of the adult form.<sup>2</sup> The sprouts are, in general, not commercially available at this time.

2. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, September 16, 1997.

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### Cuddling for Calmness

A report in the journal *Science*<sup>3</sup> says that the amount of loving attention given babies may influence how well they deal with stress as adults. Researchers at McGill University in Montreal found a very high correlation between the amount of stress hormones produced by mature rats in response to stress and the amount of licking and other attention they received from their mothers as infants. Blood levels of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) were much lower in the rats that were given lavish attention after birth. This, say the authors, would make these individuals better prepared to cope successfully in a stressful environment.

In another study from a slightly different perspective, researchers at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center were able to predict with 75 percent accuracy if a child would become socially maladjusted, use drugs, or exhibit poor academic performance, simply by noting how often the child eats meals with his parents.<sup>4</sup>

3. Science, September 1997.

4. Blake Bowden, in a presentation to the American Psychological Association in Chicago, August 16, 1997.

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### Molester Blames Drug

An osteopathic student who pleaded guilty to ambushing men with a stun gun in Chicago-area forest preserves and then sexually molesting them is now suing his dermatologist and Roche Laboratories. He says his actions were the result of his Accutane (isotretinoin) prescription.

Apparently, Governor Jim Edgar agreed, as he issued a pardon from the man's battery conviction.<sup>5</sup>

5. United Press, September 11, 1997.

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### Peanuts for the Heart

Peanut researchers have announced that one of the components of red wine that is credited with beneficial cardiovascular effects is also present in significant quantities in peanuts. Resveratrol, said to be responsible for the "French paradox" (where high-fat diets don't seem to cause much of a problem) is present in both Spanish and Virginia peanuts. You need a few more than you may be used to eating, though. To get the same amount of resveratrol found in a five ounce glass of red wine, you'll need about eleven ounces of peanuts.<sup>6</sup>

6. United Press, September 8, 1997.

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### Beef Irradiation

The U.S. House of Representatives is considering a bill that would "force" the FDA to approve irradiation of beef products. The move is in response to recent incidents of e. coli contamination in the industry. Currently, irradiation is approved for poultry, pork, spices and seasonings, among other foods.<sup>7</sup>

7. Associated Press, September 16, 1997.

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### Concern Rising about Childhood Cancers

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sponsored a two-day conference this past September to address the problem of rising cancer rates among children. Cancer is increasing (overall) in kids by about one percent each year. Some of the cancers that have increased faster than others include lymphoblastic leukemia, brain cancers, and Wilms' kidney tumor. Testicular cancer is nearly 70

percent higher than 25 years ago.

The meeting of health experts from across the country sought to investigate possible reasons and solutions for the problem, with an emphasis on environmental toxins. It has been estimated that only about half of the more than 75,000 new synthetic chemicals that have been dispersed into the environment have been tested for any kind of human toxicity.<sup>8</sup>

8. Reuter, September 15, 1997.

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#### Green Tea Better than Wine?

A new study finds that green tea exerts a more powerful anti-oxidant effect to combat heart disease and other illnesses than does wine. Researchers found high concentrations of epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) in the tea, a substance that seems to be twice as powerful as the resveratrol found in red wine. The study compared the effects of EGCG, resveratrol, BHA and BHT, and vitamins E and C on the development of live cells of a strain of bacteria prone to genetic mutations. The higher the antioxidant activity, goes the theory, the more stable the bacteria. The green tea extract rendered the best results.<sup>9</sup>

9. Lester Mitscher of the University of Kansas, reporting to a meeting of the American Chemical Society in Las Vegas, September, 1997.

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#### Eat the Wrapper

A plant-based substance used to make environmentally friendly packaging is being touted as a promoter of intestinal health. "Resistant starch" is a complex, mostly indigestible carbohydrate that seems to offer a good breeding ground for bacteria that are beneficial in the large intestine. Research in pigs has shown a 10 fold increase in such bacteria numbers, helping to protect the host from diarrhea, some types of cancer, and other illnesses. Some researchers think that a number of benefits attributed to dietary fiber may actually be due to such indigestible starches.<sup>10</sup>

10. OTC, reporting on the work of CSIRO scientist David Topping, in Adelaide, Australia, September 8, 1997, soon to be published in the Journal of Nutrition.

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#### Obesity Epidemic Not Genetic, Say Researchers

If you've watched the news and research relating to obesity lately, you may have gotten the impression that researchers have been convinced that there must be a genetic reason for the fattening of the population in developed countries. Not so, says a British research group. While genetic make-ups may influence an individual's metabolism in various circumstances, obesity still boils down to a basic principle: more calories are consumed than expended.

They have identified two main factors that have resulted in our current situation: a generalized increased consumption of high-fat foods; a marked decrease of energy expenditures. As an example of the second, in 1960 eighty-five percent of British children walked or rode a bicycle to school. Now that number is six percent. The researchers also contend that the human body is poorly

equipped to deal with the amount of fat consumed by the general population; that the body doesn't recognize when enough calories have been consumed as easily when those calories come from fat, as compared to complex carbohydrates and proteins.<sup>11</sup>

11. Research by Andrew Prentice of the Dunn Clinical Nutrition Centre in Cambridge, England, et al., reported by Reuter, September 9, 1997.

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### Single Most Frustrating Patients

Psychiatrists at the University of Washington Medical Center in Seattle say they have identified some simple indicators of which patients are most likely to drive their physicians bonkers. Single patients are much more likely to frustrate their doctors with obsessive dependence than married patients. Physicians also tend to be annoyed by patients with multiple unexplained symptoms, panic disorders, and by depressed and abused patients. Those who feel victimized by their illness also seem to distress their doctors more.<sup>12</sup>

12. United Press, September 19, 1997, reporting on the work of Dr. Edward Walker and colleagues.

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### Elderly Needn't Suffer Boring Diets

A Tufts University nutritionist told members attending a conference of the American Medical Association this past September that senior citizens don't need to quit eating some of the foods they like just because of calorie content. Many nursing homes and other facilities deny their residents frequent treats like ice cream and other flavorful foods because they fear the patient will gain weight. The answer, she says, is more activity. Walking, running, even weight lifting can be beneficial in a number of respects as evidenced by recent studies. Most seniors, even those in their 90's, should be able to work off a hot fudge sundae, given the right exercise program.<sup>13</sup>

13. Dr. Jeanne Goldberg of Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts.

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