

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

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Cholesterol for Longevity

A study published in *Lancet*¹ concludes that not only is cholesterol not bad for older citizens, but helps them live longer. Researchers studied 724 persons with a median age of 89, measuring total blood cholesterol levels and relating them to mortality. They found that for every 1 mmol/L increase in total cholesterol, there was a 15 percent decrease in overall mortality. Persons with high cholesterol levels were especially resistant to cancer and infections.

1. *Lancet*, October 18, 1997.

Low Cholesterol Leading to Strokes

Another study that should confuse average citizens was reported in the AMA's journal *Stroke* this past October.² In a study of men at retirement age, researchers found that among those who had acceptable levels of LDL (popularly known as "bad cholesterol"), the risk of stroke doubled if their HDL cholesterol levels were low. Why deficiencies of this type of cholesterol raise the likelihood of stroke is not quite clear. Unfortunately, the authors observe, physicians tend to concentrate only on LDL and total cholesterol levels; therefore many persons at risk for stroke are not getting proper information and treatment.

2. *Stroke*, October 1997.

Phen-Pro

Now that fenfluramine is no longer being used for weight loss in the fen-phen combination that damages heart valves, another drug has arisen to take its place, at least in some people's minds: Prozac. Nutri/System has been promoting a "phen-pro" combination in its diet centers that is says is just as effective as fen-phen but without the side effects. Prozac's manufacturer does not endorse this usage, and in fact warns that it could create "public health issues" and be misleading to consumers.³

3. Associated Press, September 26, 1997, reporting on correspondence between Eli Lilly & Co. and Nutri/System.

Birth Control and HIV

New research from Kenya again implicates contraceptive usage in the spread of the HIV virus, but

this one is a little different. Instead of showing that birth control pills make a mother more susceptible to HIV infection, this study reports that women who use these drugs will transmit the virus more easily to sexual partners and to babies during birth. Lack of vitamin A also seems to be a factor. The researchers found that such women tend to "shed" HIV-1 viruses at a higher rate in cervical and vaginal secretions.⁴

4. *Lancet*, September 27, 1997.

Smokers More Likely to be Overweight

Austrian researchers are reporting evidence that contradicts popular belief that smoking helps control obesity. In their study, they found that smokers were more likely to be overweight than nonsmokers. Smokers are also, as a group, less interested in eating healthy meals and are more inclined to subsist on junk foods. The higher the nicotine intake, researchers say, the less likely a person is to practice good nutrition.⁵

5. Reuter, reporting on the work of Dr. Rudolph Schoberberger of the University of Vienna, September 23, 1997.

Selenium Deficiency and AIDS

A work published in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*⁶ reports that selenium can have a tremendous impact on the long-term survival of AIDS patients. According to this research, patients with a deficiency of selenium are nearly 20 times more likely to die from AIDS. Lack of selenium seems to allow the virus to replicate faster, for some not-as-yet understood reason. The same study also found detrimental effects, to a lesser extent, when deficient in vitamins A and B12 and zinc. The National Institutes of Health is considering funding a study to look at AIDS survival among patients who boost their selenium intake above normal levels.⁷

6. *JAIDS*, September 30, 1997.

7. Reuter, September 30, 1997.

SIDS Confusion

A study published years ago in *Pediatrics*, which had a very large effect on medical thought and commerce, is now being discredited. The work suggested that a familial form of sleep apnea was responsible for a large number of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) cases. The manufacture of devices to monitor the breathing of babies during sleep became a multi-million dollar industry, and researchers received millions of dollars in grants to further investigate the problem.

It is now thought that many of those babies were actually murdered, not victims of SIDS, and that sleep apnea has very little (if anything) to do with the problem. "We never should have published this article," says the editor.⁸

8. *Pediatrics*, October 1997, in a review of the book *The Death of Innocents*.

Passive Smoking Stats

Two papers published in the *British Medical Journal* offer compelling evidence that secondhand smoke is a real health threat to live-in companions of smokers.⁹ Both are an analysis of a number of published studies on the subject. One concludes that non-smokers increase their risk of heart disease by 30 percent if they live with a smoker. The other work says that lung cancer rates increase a similar amount, and finds a correlation to the number of cigarettes smoked in the household and the length of time living with the smoker.

9. *BMJ*, October 18, 1997.

Meat-Cancer Link Questioned

A seven year study by researchers at the University of Cambridge¹⁰ concludes that frequent consumption of red meat in itself may not be a major contributor to cancer. This study of more than 3,600 Britons found that fresh fruits and vegetables do indeed offer a protective effect, but could not correlate meat consumption with cancer development.

10. Reported to the *British Medical Journal*, October 18, 1997, in a letter by Brian D. Cox, director of the Health and Lifestyle Survey.

Breast Cancer and Heart Medications

A report in *Cancer*¹¹ reveals the results of a five-year study of 3,200 women aged 65 and older, many of whom were taking heart medications. The research found that those who took some form of calcium channel blockers doubled their risk of breast cancer. Health officials and pharmaceutical representatives are quick to warn against halting such medications, saying that more research is needed.¹²

11. *Cancer*, October 14, 1997.

12. Associated Press, October 16, 1997.

Garlic Secrets Revealed

Israeli researchers are starting to discover how garlic is able to exert its antimicrobial effects. Investigations at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot reveal that the allicin in garlic interferes with two groups of enzymes: cysteine proteinases and alcohol dehydrogenases. These enzymes play a role in a wide variety of bacteria and viruses. The researchers say this is undoubtedly one of the major biochemical reasons for garlic's well-known beneficial effects.¹³

13. *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*, October 1997; authored by David Mirelman, et al.

HRT Increases Breast Cancer

An analysis of current research on the effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) concludes that there is a most definite correlation between breast cancer rates and hormone treatment. The researchers say that a woman's risk of breast cancer increases by 2.3 percent each year that she participates in HRT. Interestingly, they found that if a women quits the hormones, in about five years her risk returns to normal. The work involved 51 studies and 160,000 women.¹⁴

14. The *Lancet*, October 11, 1997.

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