Dynamic Chiropractic

PEDIATRICS

Where Are the Warning Labels?

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A recent study confirmed that certain food additives have a "significantly adverse effect" on hyperactivity in children. This was not one of those studies with a conclusion that uses words like "may" or "might" when describing the results.

This study was a "community-based, double-blinded, placebo-controlled food challenge." The authors were very clear in their interpretation of the data: "Artificial colours or a sodium benzoate preservative (or both) in the diet result in increased hyperactivity in 3-year-old and 8/9-year-old children in the general population."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1.6 million U.S. elementary-school-aged children have been diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These children undoubtedly are taking serious drugs to help control this disorder.

This study was conducted using a mixture of food colors and preservatives similar to what the average child would consume at their age (age 3 or age 8/9). The food dyes were those used in candy. The preservative, sodium benzoate, is used in many soft drinks, fruit juices, salad dressings and other foods. The children were rated by both their teachers and their parents using both a hyperactivity scale and an ADHD rating scale.

Again, the authors were not shy about their conclusions: "The present findings, in combination with the replicated evidence for the AFCA (Artificial Food Colours and other food Additives) effects on the behavior of 3-year-old children, lend strong support for the case that food additives exacerbate hyperactive behaviors (inattention, impulsivity and overactivity) in children at least up to middle childhood. Increased hyperactivity is associated with the development of educational difficulties, especially in relation to reading, and therefore these adverse effects could affect the child's ability to benefit from the experience of schooling. These findings show that adverse effects are not just seen in children with extreme hyperactivity (i.e. ADHD), but can also be seen in the general population and across the range of severities of hyperactivity. Our results are consistent with those from previous studies and extend the findings to show significant effects in the general population."

Given all of this, I have to ask some rather obvious questions:

- Why are the food products that contain these chemicals still onthe market?
- Why are the producers of these foods still using these dyes and preservatives?
- What responsibility do the makers of food dyes and preservatives have to the parents and children who have endured the consequences of this artificially induced hyperactivity?
- What percentage of the 1.6 million ADHD-diagnosed children have that condition, at least in part, due to ingesting these chemicals that are now known to cause hyperactivity?
- Why aren't the chemical manufacturers required to study these food additives before they add them to our food?
- What effect do these chemicals have on adults?
- When will the FDA insist on a warning label on all products containing any of these food additives?

The evidence is in. The makers of these additives are not being held accountable. Our government agencies have yet to take the required action to protect our children. The solution comes down to the pressure of public opinion.

This is why we provide this information on page 29 of this issue in the *Nutritional Wellness* section (see "The Hype on Artificial Additives"). It also is why we published this information in the October 2007 issue of *To Your Health* (www.toyourhealth.com) magazine that was provided for your reception area.

Chiropractic patients are a group of 15 million voters. We can work together to make our elected representatives more aware and create public awareness (and pressure) that holds companies accountable. Your patients need to know how to protect their children from hyperactivity-causing food additives. We'll do our best to keep you informed.

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