

"DC" ON LINE

Brian Sutton, DC

Blood Pressure and Infant Formula

A study published in *The Lancet*¹ suggests a link between bottle-feeding and high blood pressure later in life. This study of 216 pre-term babies takes into account a number of other risk factors for hypertension. The babies were divided into three groups: one received donated breast milk, one a normal infant formulation, and the other a formula designed for pre-term infants. The special diets lasted about one month, until each baby went home from the hospital. Sixteen years later, the children were evaluated. Those who had received breast milk exclusively after birth had a 3.2-point lower systolic reading on average than teens from either of the formula groups.

1. *The Lancet*, February 10, 2001.

Fat Diet, Thin Bones

Researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles, report that mice fed a high-fat diet lose a dramatic amount of minerals from their bones. A 15-percent bone loss was observed in the hind legs of rats that were fed the high-fat diet for seven months. The study has been published in the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*.²

2. *JBMR*, December, 2000.

Heart-Rending Relationships

A Swedish study suggests that a woman's cardiovascular health is significantly impacted by the quality of her marriage. In this study, marriage stress was associated with a near tripling of recurrent heart problems. Work stress did not seem to affect these women the way other studies have suggested it does men. The study followed 187 women already diagnosed with heart disease over a five-year period.³

3. *JAMA*, December 20, 2000.

Local versus General Anesthesia

A four-year analysis of 140 studies from around the world suggests that a lot of patients are dying from complications attributable to general anesthesia. This study reports that, for similar surgeries, patients who opt for local anesthesia suffer fewer blood clots, infections, heart attacks and kidney failures. Overall, the administration of local anesthesia instead of general (in which the patient is rendered unconscious) cut the death rate by about 30 percent.⁴

4. *British Medical Journal*, December 16, 2000.

Surgical Sweet

Laparoscopic surgery, an increasingly popular technique that involves tiny incisions and slender surgical instruments threading through the patient's body, has caused some concern recently relating to colon cancer treatment. There have been some reports of a resurgence of the cancer, by which the new tumors are spread along the route that the instrument took during surgery. But now Turkish researchers suggest that the application of a little honey through the laparoscopic path may prevent this. The researchers have published their work, a study of 60 mice, in the *Archives of Surgery*.⁵ Their technique produced tumors in all 30 mice that did not have the honey treatment, while tumors grew in only 8 of the 30 that were treated with honey.

5. *Archives of Surgery*, December 2000.

Coffee and Cigarettes

Researchers looking into the effects of coffee and cigarettes on bladder cancer were intrigued by their findings in a study published recently in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.⁶ Tobacco and caffeine are thought to increase the likelihood of the disease, with smoking more likely so. However, they found that while smokers who didn't drink coffee were seven times more susceptible than nonsmokers, those that did had only three times the risk. The researchers aren't sure why coffee would offer a protective benefit, but one might hypothesize that the diuretic affect should reduce the relative concentrations of toxins in the bladder. The authors of the study point out that it still makes more sense to quit smoking than to take up drinking coffee as a precaution.

The study involved 1,500 volunteers; those drinking two cups of coffee or fewer per week were classified as non-coffee drinkers for the purpose of this study.

6. *JECH*, December, 2000.

Transient Ischemic Attacks as Stroke Precursors

A study of 1,700 patients at the University of California at San Francisco reports that about 10 percent of those experiencing a transient ischemic attack will have a stroke within the following three months. This number is in line with previous studies. However, they found that half of those strokes occurred

within two days, a finding that surprised the researchers. They suggest that patients experiencing symptoms such as sudden numbness or blurred vision should call 911 and be hospitalized immediately. Unfortunately for many patients, doctors often postpone work-ups for a few days, especially if the attack only lasts a few minutes.⁷ Also, there is little data to indicate what (if any) treatment is an effective preventive technique.

7. *JAMA*, December 13, 2000.

Mushrooms for HIV

Medical scientists from Tanzania are promoting mushrooms as a way to increase immunity and reduce HIV replication. The species *ganoderma lucidum* in particular is thought to be especially beneficial. However, instead of extracting some particular active compound into a drug, they are recommending using it as a whole food dietary supplement. They say that instead of having a direct effect on the virus, it enhances the body's immune system to produce effects superior to analgesics for cancer pain, in addition to helping the body suppress the HIV virus and tuberculosis infections. According to researchers, the mushroom has "medicinal functions attributed to synergistic effects of lectins, terpenoids, steroids, nucleic acid and immunomodulatory proteins."⁸

8. Dr. Titus Kabalimu of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (Cotech), at a Zero Emissions Research Initiative meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, January 11, 200, reported by OTC news service.

Designer Pig Food

Researchers from Iowa State University are testing the hypothesis that salmonella can be reduced in pork products by feeding the pigs yogurt. The three-year grant from the U.S. Agriculture Department is an investigation into alternatives to antibiotic use in farm animals. Preliminary results show a reduction in salmonella in young pigs fed a milk product rich in *lactobacillus*.

In a related project, Ohio State University reports that pigs grow faster (and perhaps tastier) when 10 to 15 percent of their normal corn diet is replaced with potato chips.⁹

9. Associated Press, January 7, 2001.

Avocados for Livers

Japanese researchers¹⁰ report that avocados appear be good for your liver. Over a two-week period, they fed rats one of 22 fruits, in addition to D-galactosamine, a chemical known to induce liver damage. The avocado-fed rats fared the best, followed by those consuming watermelon, papaya, lychee, kiwi, Japanese plum, grapefruit, fig and cherry.¹¹ The researchers are planning a follow-up

study on human volunteers with liver disease.

10. Hirokazu Kawagishi of Shizuoka University, and associates reporting to a meeting of the American Chemical Society in Honolulu, December 18, 2000.¹¹ OTC, December 18, 2000.

Charlie Chaplin for Allergic Reactions

Another study from Japan published in a letter in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*¹² suggests that laughter speeds recovery from allergic reactions. Twenty-six allergy-sensitive volunteers were injected with allergens to produce welts and skin rashes, then spent 87 minutes watching television. Half watched a Charlie Chaplin comedy, the other half watched weather reports. At the end of that time, the skin reactions of those who had seen the movie had shrunk; the weather viewers showed no such effect. This work was inspired by other reports (particularly those of author Norman Cousins) that laughter has a healing effect.

12. *JAMA*, February 14, 2001.

Low-Fat Strokes

Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health, analyzing results from a health study of nurses that began in 1980, report a possible link between very low saturated fat diets and a particular type of stroke. They found that the risk of an intraparenchymal hemorrhage was doubled in these women, compared to those who consumed a moderate amount (25 to 36 grams per day) of saturated fat. Because the strokes occurred primarily in women with elevated blood pressure, the authors speculate that the low-fat diet led to a structural weakness in the vascular system, resulting in a rupture of a blood vessel.¹³ The research was inspired by findings from Japan, where the incidence of hemorrhagic stroke has been observed at twice the normal rate in regions that consume very little saturated fat.

13. *Circulation*, February 1, 2001.

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