Dynamic Chiropractic

NUTRITION / DETOXIFICATION

DC On Line (Chiropractic Research)

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Prescription Advertising

Since the FDA relaxed the regulations on drug advertising a couple of years ago, you may have noticed more and more medication ads suggesting, "Ask your doctor." One has to wonder why companies would spend $620 million during the first half of 1998 alone to influence consumers when their doctors are supposed to know which drug to prescribe. However, looking at the research that suggest doctors are bullied by patients into prescribing antibiotics against medical care standards, it becomes clear that these ads probably do stimulate more profits than losses.

There is an ad for a diabetes drug that targets Hispanics. The full-page ad in Spanish describs how easy and effective the medication is. On the other side of the page, you see the obligatory warning that the drug can cause liver failure -- in English.

And you can't count on the medical doctor to keep patients straight. One research project found that nearly half of the ads in medical journals contained inaccuracies or misleading statements that could lead to improper prescriptions.[1]

1. Associated Press, Jan. 14, 1999.

BGH Ban in Canada

After careful consideration, Canadian health officials have upheld a ban on genetically engineered bovine growth hormone in dairy animals. An independent committee of scientists has decided that the hormone is too risky -- not to humans, but to cows. According to studies, BGH increases the incidence of mastitis by 25 percent. Infertility increases by 18 percent, and the animal has a 50 percent increased risk of going lame.[2] A number of groups are petitioning the United States government to reevaluate the product, saying that some other hazards were overlooked when it was approved for use in 1993.

2. Associated Press, Jan. 14, 1999.

Calcium for Polyps

Research from Dartmouth Medical School in New Hampshire suggests that calcium may inhibit colon polyp formation. A study of over 800 volunteers found that those taking an additional 1,200 mg of

calcium per day decreased the recurrence of colon adenomas (polyps) by 19 percent.[3]

3. *NEJM,* Jan. 14, 1999

Zinc for the Brain

Researchers at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California report that zinc appears to be an important part of proper nerve function.[4] At first, they thought the element was just a contaminant during analysis, but soon realized that it was part of the "ion channels" that regulate calcium and potassium flow during nerve communication. According to one researcher, "Zinc is embedded within structures that are absolutely critical for nerve cell activity."

4. *Nature Structural Biology,* January 1999.

Magnetic Healing

Researchers from the New York Medical College in Valhalla report in the *American Journal of Pain Management* that low-strength magnetic fields do appear to be able to improve some pain syndromes. Diabetic volunteers suffering from chronic foot pain were issued a set of pads to wear on their feet -- one magnetized, the other not. The patients were not told which one was magnetized. A definite improvement in pain was noted that the researchers attributed to the magnetic pads. The study lasted four months.[5]

5. *AJPM,* January 1999.

Children's Anesthetics

A report in the journal Science suggests that drugs routinely used to anesthetize children may kill developing brain cells. Researchers from the Washington University School of Medicine found that developing rat brains are sensitive to toxic effects of nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and ketamine. The damage occurred at a time corresponding in humans to the sixth month of pregnancy through the second birthday. Angel dust (PCP) produced similar findings.[6]

6. *Science,* January 1, 1999.

Radon Rebuttal

A new study from Colombia University concludes that radon gas may not be as serious a problem as previously thought. Researchers developed a method to quantify the effects of the alpha particles of the radon gas on individual body cells. They found no significant carcinogenic effect at the level

normally found in a radon-affected home, which would contain sparsely distributed alpha particles. Previous estimates of the danger were made by extrapolating epidemiological data from uranium miners, who would have had a much higher exposure.[7]

7. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, January 1999.

Another Reason to Take a Drink

A new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*[8] concludes that alcohol can help prevent strokes. Volunteers from New York City who drank one or two alcoholic beverages each day had a 45 percent lower incidence of ischemic strokes. This is the most common type of stroke, due to a lack of blood reaching the brain. It is generally thought to be caused by a blood clot or blood vessel constriction. Too much alcohol, though, can make things much worse: seven or more drinks per day caused strokes to increase by 300 percent.

8. *JAMA*, January 6, 1999.

Migraines and Strokes

British researchers say that migraine headache sufferers are much more likely to also suffer a stroke. In their study of women, ages 20-44, those who had a history of migraines were 3.5 times more likely to have an ischemic stroke. About one third of the migraine sufferers' strokes seemed to stem directly from the headache. A family history of migraines by itself appears to raise the risk of both ischemic and hemorrhagic (burst blood vessel) strokes. Other factors they say increase the risks are smoking, oral contraceptives and high blood pressure.[9]

9. *British Medical Journal*, January 2, 1999.

Carcinogenic Sunscreen

Scientists from Queen's University in Northern Ireland have discovered that an ingredient present in 25 percent of sunscreens on the market appears to initiate cell changes that could lead to skin cancer. They report that the chemical PBSA (2-phenylbenzimidazole-5-sulfonic acid) damages cell DNA when exposed to sunlight. Apparently, as it absorbs UV-B rays it becomes energized enough to inflict damage on surrounding tissue. The research was done in test tubes, so it is as yet unknown exactly how or to what extent it may affect human skin.[10]

10. *Chemical Research in Toxicology*, January 1999.

Cancer-Inhibiting Beer

Japanese researchers report that an as-yet unidentified component of beer appears to be a strong cancer inhibitor. Researchers studied 24 different beers from 11 countries and found the effect most pronounced among stout beers. After being given cancer-causing chemicals, mouse volunteers that consumed the beer exhibited fewer carcinogenic changes than the abstainers.[11] Followup research in humans is likely.

11. *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (published by the American Chemical Society), January 1999.

Transfusion Confusion

A new study suggests that prescribing blood transfusions for anemic hospital patients may be doing more harm than good in many cases. Doctors randomly divided over 800 critical and anemic patients into two groups. The first received an average of 5.6 units of blood apiece, while the second group received less than half that. About one-third of the second group had no transfusions at all.

At the end of the study, patients younger than 55 years and those less critically ill, died more often in the more aggressively transfused group. Doctors vary on the level of hemoglobin they use as a trigger to order a transfusion. This research suggests that the more conservative approach is safer for the patient.[12]

12. Dr. Paul C. Hebert, et al., of the University of Ottawa. *New England Journal of Medicine*, February 20, 1999.