

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

Smoking and Emotional Problems

New research from a five-year study in Michigan reports a strong correlation between smoking and depression. Persons who smoked every day were nearly twice as likely to suffer major episodes of depression when compared to occasional smokers. Those who were depressed at the onset of the study were also three times more likely by the end of the study to be smoking daily. Researchers have no explanation for these statistics, or even a major hypothesis of which problem may lead to the other.¹

1. Archives of General Psychiatry, February 1998.

Smoking and Ear Infections

Another study has linked second-hand smoke to ear infections in children. A report in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*² details a Canadian study of the effects of parental smoking on 625 first-graders. Compared to children who lived in smoke-free homes, those residing with two smoking parents were 85% more likely to suffer from frequent ear infections.

2. APAM, February 1998.

Exercise Over Genetics

A Finnish study has demonstrated that, for persons of similar genetic make-up, exercise is an important contributor to life extension. Researchers from the University of Helsinki followed a large number of twin pairs for 20 years. In each pair, only one was inclined to exercise regularly. They found that the risk of early death was 56 percent lower in siblings who worked out vigorously at least six times per month. Occasional exercisers were still one third less likely to die than sedentary counterparts.³

3. JAMA, February 11, 1998.

Water Blamed for Miscarriages

A study by the California health department suggests that chlorinated drinking water can increase the

risk of miscarriage by as much as 65 percent. Records of over 5,000 pregnancies were examined and correlated to the number of glasses of tap water consumed daily. All tap water was judged to meet state and federal standards, but contained a contaminant (trihalomethane, a by product of chlorination) that is thought to raise miscarriage and cancer risks. The authors recommend that mothers-to-be boil their water before consuming it.⁴

4. *Epidemiology*, February 18, 1998.

Alligator Hormones

Another indicator of possible environmental toxins leading to decreased fertility is being examined in the Florida wetlands.⁵ Populations of alligators in Florida lakes have been dropping recently. Researchers have found decreased testosterone level in males, and increases in estradiol in female gators. The hormonal disturbances are thought to interfere with maturation and thus slow procreation. These findings are reminiscent of a previous alligator decline during the early 1980s that was linked to pesticides.

5. *Environmental Toxicology*, March, 1998.

B Vitamins for the Cardiovascular System

Vitamin B6 and folic acid can help prevent cardiovascular disease and stroke, according to a study published in the journal *Circulation*.⁶ Researchers evaluating patients suffering from blocked arteries found decreased blood levels of these nutrients. This follows another recent study of 80,000 nurses that found that heart disease was cut in half in those that consumed 3-4 times the recommended daily allowance of folacin and vitamin B6.⁷

6. *Circulation*, February 9, 1998.

7. *JAMA*, February 4, 1998.

Tylenol Warning

A gastroenterologist from Children's Hospital in Cincinnati⁸ warns that children can suffer potentially fatal liver damage if parents are not careful when administering acetaminophen. If a young child is given two adult-strength tablets, he says, that is comparable to an adult taking eight. His studies have suggested that severe liver toxicity can result from excessive dosages over just a few days, maybe less. Twenty-four children have died in the United States from such overdoses.⁹

8. Dr. James Heubi.

9. United Press, January 31, 1998.

Caffeine and Crib Death

A New Zealand study concludes that women who drink four or more cups of coffee or other caffeinated drinks each day while pregnant may be increasing their infant's chances of sudden infant death syndrome. Researchers gathered data on nearly 2,000 babies and found a significant increase in the SIDS rates in children whose mothers had consumed large quantities of coffee, tea, and cola drinks. They speculate that the sudden withdrawal of caffeine (after birth) creates a weakness in respiration.¹⁰

10. Archives of Disease in Childhood, January, 1998.

Home Exercise

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Florida reports that, contrary to popular belief, women who work out at home lose more weight than those who participate in group exercise programs. In this 15 month study, the home exercisers lost 66 percent more weight. Apparently, those participating in the group exercise programs found that traveling to the site was often an obstacle.¹¹

11. United Press, March 20, 1998, reporting on the work of Michael Perri, professor of clinical and health psychology.

Cigarettes Slow Bone Healing

Another study has concluded that smokers' bones heal slower. In a presentation to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons¹², one researcher reports that hand bones of smokers take two months longer to heal than those of nonsmokers. He studied hand surgery patients to reach his conclusions. Previous studies have shown similar results for foot and spinal surgery patients.

12. March 19, 1998, meeting of the AAOS in New Orleans by Dr. Franklin Chen of Northwestern University Medical School, Chicago.

Deaths Stop Medical Research

A recent report by Reuters news service reveals that medical researchers assessing an exciting new treatment for stroke were forced to halt their trials prematurely due to complications from the treatment. Doctors were trying anti-coagulant drugs, normally used in heart patients, to see if they could speed the recovery of stroke victims. However, after 17 patients died and another 36 suffered serious side effects, the experiment was stopped. No deaths were reported in the control group. The victims died from internal bleeding.¹³

13. Reuters, March 19, 1998, reporting on research based at Utrecht University Hospital in

Amsterdam during 1996.

Vitamin D Deficiency Epidemic

The New England Journal of Medicine reports that adults in the United States may, more frequently than not, have too little vitamin D in their bodies. Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital tested patients for the vitamin and found that nearly 60 percent were deficient. The patients had been hospitalized for a variety of ailments; many reported taking vitamins regularly.¹⁴

14. *NEJM*, March 19, 1998.

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