

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

Eat Less to Minimize Age-Related Muscle Wasting

University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers say that age-related muscle wasting can be minimized by reducing your caloric intake. They noticed that rats on a restricted diet kept their muscles intact longer than those who were able to eat more freely. This study is the latest in a number that show various benefits from exercising dietary restraint.¹

1. United Press, Health Notes, July 1, 1997, reporting on the work of Richard Weindruch et al.

Vitamin-Enriched Tomato

European researchers have announced the breeding of a genetically altered tomato that is richer in vitamins and promoted as a way to combat cancer and heart disease. The Flavr Savr tomato is said to have four times the beta-carotene as your average variety of hot-house tomatoes, and twice as much lycopene, another anti-oxidant, thought to have beneficial effects. Lycopene also contributes to the tomato's reddish color. Researchers spliced the tomato's DNA with that of certain bacteria to achieve their results. If this development appeals to you, the developers are looking for humans to help them test the effects of this new product on people's health. Similar work is currently being done with peppers in Spain and Germany.²

2. Reuter, July 8, 1997.

Upcoming Movie: "The Naked Man"

A new movie is scheduled to begin filming this month called "The Naked Man," reportedly about a man's search for identity, with chiropractic and professional wrestling featured prominently in the story. The script was written by J. Todd Anderson and Ethan Coen; the film will star Michael Rapaport.³

3. Reuter, July 18, 1997.

Alcohol Prominent in Lower Class Mortality

Researchers from Finland say that one reason members of lower economic groups die at a younger age is alcohol. Examining the death certificates of working class men, they found that 10 percent cited alcohol as a contributing factor. It wasn't liver disease and nutritional deficiencies that killed these people though, but violence. In fact, half of all violent and accidental deaths were alcohol-related. For women, that figure was 38 percent.⁴

4. *British Medical Journal*, July 26, 1997.

Children Cause Stress

A new study from Duke University Medical Center will confirm the suspicions that children can cause stress in their parents. Not only that, this study goes so far as to suggest they can cause an early demise. Researchers measured stress hormones, which they say elevates the risk of heart attacks, and found a difference between women who come home from work to houses with and without children. Without the kids, the women's epinephrine and norepinephrine levels decline significantly in the evening. Not so when the little rascals are about. In that case, mom's hormones stay high all evening. Interestingly, the number of children doesn't seem to matter.⁵

5. United Press, July 22, 1997.

Senate Considers Allowing Unproven Drug Treatments

A bill is being formulated in the U.S. Senate that would permit drug manufacturers to promote their existing products for unproven uses. Florida Senator Connie Mack says that doctors have trouble keeping up with novel uses for old medications. He thinks that drug company sales people should be allowed to suggest to doctors new and creative ways to use their products.

Currently, the FDA prohibits promotion of a drug for conditions in which it has not been adequately tested. Mack's legislation would allow drug unproven to suggest minimally researched treatment that might otherwise be considered experimental.⁶

6. Associated Press, July 22, 1997.

New Heart Treatments, Same Mortality

A study of two hospitals published in the *British Medical Journal* may disappoint many who are infatuated with new and high-tech treatments for heart attacks. Researchers looked at patients admitted between 1982 and 1992, a time when a large number of new treatments were developed and implemented. Specifically, they examined beta-blockers and thrombolytic drugs, finding that although their usage increased dramatically, death rates did not change. The authors suggest that heart specialists should re-examine their treatments if they want to improve outcomes.⁷

7. *BMJ*, July 19, 1997.

Hormone Replacement Therapy

A review of 22 separate studies published in the *British Medical Journal*⁸ concludes that, at least in the short term, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) offers no protection from heart disease in post-menopausal women. Doctors have long thought that maybe they would and have prescribed accordingly. Now they have to rely on faith that maybe they help in the long-term.

8. *BMJ*, July 19, 1997.

Disc Nerves Cause Pain

French researchers are postulating a possible explanation for some cases of chronic back pain: nerve overgrowth. Looking at tissue from discectomy patients, they found that nearly half of those suffering from chronic pain had nerves growing deeper than usual into the disc, sometimes into the nucleus pulposus. They also found evidence of a vascular supply, suggesting the possibility of some kind of post-traumatic healing process.⁹

9. *The Lancet*, July 19, 1997.

Miscarriage Preventive Treatment Discredited

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*¹⁰ questions the usefulness of doctors prescribing prednisone and aspirin to women at high risk for miscarriages. Some physicians consider certain unexplained miscarriages to be the result of an obscure autoimmune disorder, and contend that anti-inflammatory products should help. In this study of 200 women who fit into that group, they didn't. In fact, the drugs seemed to cause more problems: premature births were four times higher, and diabetes and hypertension occurred three times as often. The treatment, considered experimental, is not uncommon nonetheless.

10. *NEJM*, July 17, 1997.

Sepsis Syndrome on the Rise

A commonly fatal condition known as sepsis syndrome, a systemic bacterial infection, seems to be increasing. The problem is seen mostly in hospital patients or those otherwise under intensive medical treatment. Symptoms are breathing difficulties, rapid heart rate, and a sharp blood pressure drop. It is fatal in about half the cases.¹¹

A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*¹² documents more than 1,300 cases, or about one in 10 of the hospital patients examined. The syndrome appears to be increasing because of more frequent use of invasive medical treatments and immunosuppressive drugs.

11. Associated Press, July 15, 1997.

12. *JAMA*, July 16, 1997.

Benzene and Leukemia

A study of 75,000 Chinese workers associates benzene exposure with blood cancers such as leukemia. The study found increased risk at average levels as low as 10 parts per million, with risks increasing as concentration rises.¹³ Workers exposed for 10 years or more had four times the incidence of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Benzene exposure is common in many industrial occupations including paint manufacture and use, printing, gasoline, shoe manufacturing, and in cigarette smokers.¹⁴

13. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, July 16, 1997.

14. Reuter, July 15, 1997.

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