

DC On-Line (Chiropractic Research)

Brian Sutton, DC

Prenatal Folic Acid

By now, everyone must know of the importance of folic acid in the diet of mothers-to-be. However, women taking prescription vitamins may be getting shortchanged. Researchers at the University of Maryland have noticed that such vitamins don't dissolve well. Of the preparations they tested, two-thirds released less than 75 percent of the amount listed on the label in standard one hour tests. The author of the study cautions that these supplements may provide "inadequate" nutrition.¹

1. Steven Hoag, University of Maryland.

Bacterial Heart Attacks

A study published in the journal *Circulation* finds that infections by chlamydia pneumonia seem to make men more vulnerable to second heart attacks. Those who tested positive for the infection were four times as likely to suffer a recurrence. Researchers also noted that the germ was seen embedded in fatty plaques lining atherosclerotic arteries. The 18-month study involved 213 heart attack survivors. Twenty-eight percent of the chlamydia-positive men experienced a second heart attack, compared to only seven percent of the non-infected group. The relationship seems to have something to do with inflammation causing scarring or blood clots.²

2. *Circulation*, July 1997.

Smoking and Behavioral Problems

Another study correlating pre-natal smoking with behavioral problems in offspring has been published, this time in the AMA's *Archives of General Psychiatry*.³ "Conduct disorder," a diagnosis designating serious antisocial behavior, is more than four times as common in boys whose mothers smoked more than 10 cigarettes per day during pregnancy. The six year study involved 177 pre-teenage boys.

3. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, July 1997.

HIV Drug Mimics Infection

A spokesman for the National Institutes of Health says that a drug commonly used to treat HIV patients can easily fool a physician into believing the patient has a urinary tract infection. Indinavir (brand name Crixivan) tends to crystalize in the urine, causing flank pain and urethral burning. A high water intake is recommended by the drug maker to minimize the effect.⁴

4. United Press, July 14, 1997.

Thai Babies Not Getting Mother's Milk

A UNICEF report reveals that Thai babies are the least likely in Asia to be breastfed. While most developing countries have an exclusive breastfeeding rate of about 44 percent, in Thailand only four percent of babies have that opportunity. Compare this to countries like Rwanda and Burundi, where nine out of every ten babies were breastfed. The report blames the sad state of affairs in Thailand on aggressive marketing by infant formula manufacturers. UNICEF says that replacing infant formula with mothers' milk could save 1.5 million lives each year.⁵

5. Reuter, July 23, 1997.

Breastfeeding and Diabetes

A report published in *The Lancet*⁶ says that breastfeeding seems to help protect children from developing diabetes later in life. The paper says that the most common form of the condition, non-insulin-dependant diabetes, was significantly lower among adults who had breastfed for at least two months as babies. The study was done on 720 Pima Indians, a group that for some reason seems to be prone to diabetes and related problems.

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

Pollution Attacks

London researchers have found a correlation between heart attacks and air pollution. A report in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*⁷ details work at St. George's Hospital Medical School that correlates a number of health problems to black smoke, nitric oxide, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide. Besides increasing the rate of heart attacks (mainly during cool weather), some of those contaminants were also linked to irregular heart rhythms, chest pain, and certain circulatory disease. Pollution, they say, may be responsible for about one in every 50 myocardial infarctions.

7. *OEM*, August 1997.

Prenatal Calcium

A study of nearly 600 children sponsored by the World Health Organization concludes that the calcium intake of a mother during pregnancy can influence the blood pressure of her offspring. Systolic pressure was lower in older children whose mothers took two grams of calcium a day while pregnant, compared to those taking a placebo. The effect was especially noticeable in overweight children.⁸

8. *British Medical Journal*, August 2, 1997.

Environmental Effects on IQ

Studies comparing identical and fraternal twins suggest that not only is a child's intelligence quotient affected by his genetic qualities, but also by his pre-birth environment. An analysis of more than 200 studies by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh's school of medicine suggests that some type of learning occurs in the womb, judging by a statistical analysis of the IQ of fraternal twins, identical twins, and non-twin siblings separated at birth.⁹ The authors estimate that only about 34 percent of intellectual aptitude is inherited.

9. *Reuter*, July 31, 1997, reporting on the work of Bernie Devlin et al.

Back School Statistics

A study by Boston researchers looking into the effect of "back school" industrial training classes concludes that the schools "are not by themselves an effective intervention" in preventing low back injuries. The research, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*,¹⁰ is based on a back school program set up by the research team at two large postal centers. (Editor's note: See front page story for details.)

10. *NEJM*, July 30, 1997.

Lung Cancer Guidelines

The American Society of Clinical Oncology has published a new set of guidelines relating to lung cancer that attempts to discourage many common medical practices that are wasteful and ineffective. For example, the drug etoposide was shown by scientific studies to be ineffective years ago, yet many doctors still continue to prescribe it routinely. Bone and brain scans costing millions of dollars each year have little impact on heading off recurrences of the condition.¹¹

11. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, August, 1997.

Hungry Mothers Have Weak Babies

Research in Gambia is illustrating how important prenatal nutrition is to children. In Gambia, the months of July through October are known as the "hungry season," when food is scarce but work is hard. Researchers found that children born at that time were up to 10 times more likely to die prematurely by the time they were young adults, mostly from infective disease. The study spanned over 40 years.¹²

12. Reuter, July 30, 1997.

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