

"DC" On-Line

Brian Sutton, DC

TB Vaccine Ineffective

Researchers testing the BCG vaccine in South Africa, said to have the world's worst problem with tuberculosis, have concluded that it is ineffective for citizens there. The trial ran for four years and included 120,000 patients. In what he described as a "severe blow" to British researchers and the South African government, a spokesman said that even multiple doses had no effect. The failure is blamed on drug-resistant strains of the bacteria.¹

1. Reuter, July 12, 1996.

Low Hospital Accreditation Standards

According to the Public Citizen's Health Research Group, lax standards by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) are letting hospitals get away with murder -- well, at least with deadly negligence. Their year-long investigation, published in the Public Citizen,² reports that there are some years when not one hospital loses its accreditation. Yet a sample of JCAHO documents from 1992 showed that one third of hospitals surveyed had demonstrated poor performance in surgical and anesthesia monitoring; one third scored poorly for their patient care programs; and nearly one half had inadequate infection controls.

2. Public Citizen, July 10, 1996.

Zinc Speeds Common Cold Recovery

A new study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine³ concludes that the duration of the common cold can be cut nearly in half with zinc supplementation. Volunteers began taking 13.3 mg of zinc every two hours within a day of onset of symptoms during waking hours. The median time for all symptoms to disappear was 3.3 days, compared to 7.6 for the placebo group. The researchers used a lemon-flavored lozenge manufactured by Quigley Corporation.

3. Annals of Internal Medicine, July 15, 1996.

A report from Oxford University says that the seahorse population in the Indo-Pacific region has fallen by 50 percent in the last five years because of increased harvesting for medicinal purposes. More than 20 million seahorses are used each year for their purported medical benefits in conditions such as asthma and heart disease. They're also included in the list of creatures and substances said to have aphrodisiac properties. Seahorses are in especially high demand in China and Hong Kong, where one kilogram can sell for as much as \$1,200.⁴

4. Reuter, July 10, 1996.

Rare HIV Strain Found in L.A.

A strain of HIV that often escapes detection in standard blood tests has been discovered in a woman in Los Angeles. This type, called Group O, has only been seen about 100 times worldwide. It is notable because normal tests, such as those used by blood banks, can easily miss it. However, officials say that it is unlikely that this virus is prevalent in the US because the woman has had only one sexual partner since her arrival in 1994. They are now trying to find that man for testing.⁵

5. Associated Press, July 5, 1996.

Tall People Live Longer

At a meeting of the British Congress of Gerontology recently, a Southampton researcher⁶ outlined his research that showed a strong link between height and longevity. Some studies, he says, show that an eight-inch height difference in adult women can translate into half the mortality. However, excessively tall men seem to lose the advantage. One explanation is that healthy children grow taller and have a long-lasting edge on their less- fortunate peers.

6. Dr. Bernard Harris of Southampton University.

"Vegetative" Patients Misdiagnosed

A study published in the British Medical Journal⁷ found that nearly one half of a sample of patients was misdiagnosed to be in a vegetative state. Researchers examining the records of patients at London's Royal Hospital for Neurodisability concluded that a significant number of patients were much more aware than their doctors supposed. About one third slowly emerged from their condition over about three years.

7. BMJ, July 5, 1996.

Cranberries for Cancer

University of Illinois researchers⁸ say that their studies suggest that cranberries and similar fruits may inhibit tumor growth and offer protection from cancer-related enzymes. This preliminary work consists of in-vitro studies that are expected to be published soon in Germany's *Planta Medica*.

8. Keith Singletary and Mary Ann Lila Smith.

"Natural" Taste Test Winners

The People's Choice Awards judged the most palatable "natural" food products at the National Nutritional Foods Association's show in Nashville. Among this year's winners:⁹

- Not Chicken Nuggets (Longa Life)
- Classic Golden Crackers, Cookie Lover's Creme Supremes, Shanghai Palace Dressing, and Fat-Free Rice Drink (Tree of Life)
- Buttermilk and Buckwheat Pancakes (Up Country Naturals of Vermont)
- Natural Touch Kaffree Roma (Worthington Foods)
- Drink (Greens+ Orange Peel Enterprises)
- Natural Brew Draft Root Beer (Knudsen)
- Pure Energy Iced Tea (Montana Naturals)
- Natural Wafflers cereal (U.S. Mills)
- Corn (Westbrae)
- Potato and Nacho Chips (Ripple)
- Tiger's Milk Chocolate Bar (Weider)
- Turbo Energy Bars (Verilite)
- Turkey Meat Balls (Shelton Poultry)
- Chili (Health Valley)
- Veggie Frank (Natural Touch)
- Fire-Roasted Red Salsa (Zapata)

9. OTC Newswire, July 13, 1996.

The Waianae Diet

A weight loss and health restoring diet program is gaining favor in Hawaii, reportedly helping many diabetics to eliminate their insulin dependency. The diet was created by Dr. Terry Shintani, and is included in a weight-loss program funded by the state.¹⁰ Participants are enthusiastic about the low-fat, high fiber diet composed of traditional Hawaiian foods. The program also includes food for the mind and spirit, ranging from life advice from cultural elders to massage and water purifications. Participants lose an average of 17 pounds in the first 21 days, and seem to be able to maintain their weight loss easier than the typical dieter.¹¹

10. *Hawaii's state Department of Health*.

11. *Associated Press, July 7, 1996.*

Menu Police

The FDA has been ordered by a federal judge to amend the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 to include restaurant menus. This means that any health claims about an item a particular establishment might serve must be well documented. The FDA previously exempted eating establishments from the requirement, but has come under pressure from citizen's groups. Precisely what the rules should be is not clear at this writing, but a decision is expected to be made by the time you read this.¹²

12. *Associated Press, July 3, 1996.*

Shoot Smokers with Vitamin C

German research on 10 long-time smokers concludes that vitamin C injections counteract some of the adverse cardiovascular effects of cigarette smoke on the bloodstream. The researchers measured blood vessel dilation rate, normally sluggish in smokers, and found significant improvement after administration of the vitamin. They next plan to quantify any similar effects of oral vitamin C supplementation.¹³ Another study at the University of Pennsylvania published in the same journal documents a reduction of free radicals in the blood after orally ingesting the vitamin.

13. *Circulation, July 1, 1996.*

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