

DC Online

Brian Sutton, DC

Food for Thought

Researchers from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago report the brain benefits greatly from occasional meals of fish. In this study,¹ more than 3,700 people 65 years and older performed multiple cognitive tests over six years, correlating the scores with diet. Researchers found that subjects who had at least one meal of fish each week showed a 10 percent slowing of the mental decline seen in the rest of the group. Those who had two meals or more benefited by 13 percent. The researchers tried, but failed, to correlate the benefit to the amount of omega-3 fatty acids consumed, previously thought responsible for many of the health benefits of seafood. Presumably something else produced the benefit, although some say the study may not have been very conducive to measuring the omega-3 content of the diets accurately. The fish was consumed in a wide variety of forms, including tuna, fish sticks, shrimp, crab, lobster, and various fresh fish entrees.

1. *Archives of Neurology*, December 2005.
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Move It or Lose It

In a report that should not surprise anyone who has studied physiology, the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) says, in a work titled "Move It or Lose It," that regular exercise is one of the best things you can do to prevent or slow bone loss. One of the findings of their research was that a woman who sits for nine hours each day has a 50 percent higher chance of having a hip fracture than a woman who sits for less than six hours. The report also correlates weight-bearing exercise with fewer vertebral fractures.²

1. Reuters, Oct. 20, 2005.
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Exercise for Pain

Research from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., suggests vigorous exercise may help prevent future joint and muscle pain. The study examined adults ages 50 and older, and found that those who exercised regularly had pain-rating scores 25 percent lower than their sedentary peers, as well as a lower incidence of arthritis. About half of the subjects participating in the study were members of a runners club, averaging about five hours of exercise each week.³

1. Reuters, Sept. 28, 2005, reporting on a paper published in *Arthritis Research & Therapy*, Sept. 19, 2005.

Dementia Treatment Deaths

An analysis of 15 studies⁴ involving 5,000 elderly patients suggests some of the common treatments for dementia-related symptoms are killing patients. Researchers from the University of Southern California found that the risk of a patient dying within the first 12 weeks of treatment increased by 54 percent with a class of drugs called atypical antipsychotics, compared to placebos. The drugs are not explicitly approved for use in dementia patients, but are commonly prescribed by doctors because these patients often display symptoms similar to schizophrenia and bipolar disease, for which these drugs are intended. These drugs are sold under the brand names of Zyprexa, Risperdal, Seroquel and Abilify.⁵

1. *JAMA*, Oct. 19, 2005.
 2. Reuters, Oct. 18, 2005.
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Eat Your Veggies

A report published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*⁶ concludes that boys who eat a lot of fruits and vegetables have higher mineral concentrations in their bones, and thus denser, stronger bone structures. Exercise was also a major factor in bone development. The study followed 152 boys and girls for seven years; researchers noted children's diet and exercise habits and measuring bone density with X-ray absorptiometry. This study found no correlation of diet to bone density in girls, although other studies have.

1. *AJCN*, September 2005.
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Pomegranates for the Prostate

A study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* concludes that pomegranate juice inhibits prostate tumor growth. The tumors, cultivated in mice from human prostate tissue, shrank as a result of administering the fruit juice, which researchers noted as having "remarkable antitumor-promoting effects."⁷ Human research trials undoubtedly will follow soon.

1. *PNAS* 2005;102:14813-14818.
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Loss of Face

A presentation to a recent meeting of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons in Chicago contends that a surprising amount of the aging we see in older faces is actually due to bone shrinkage. The study used CAT scans to detect differences in bone volume at varying age groups. The presenter⁸ credits the loss of bone for much of the sagging and looseness of the skin on the face.

1. Dr. David Kahn, of Palo Alto, California, as reported by Reuters on Sept. 27, 2005.

Antibiotics and Dental Fluorosis

A study published in the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*⁹ concludes that the use of some antibiotics in very young children can increase the likelihood of fluorosis in their teeth. The study found that the risk doubled when the antibiotic amoxicillin was given between the ages of 3 months and 6 months. Among the 579 children followed from birth to 32 months, 91 percent had been given the antibiotic at least once. Evidence of dental fluorosis was seen in 24 percent of the children by the end of the study. Fluorosis causes pits and brown stains in teeth, and can lead to other dental problems.

1. *APAM*, October 2005.

Exercise for Alzheimer's

Researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden report that middle-aged people who exercise at least twice each week are less susceptible to Alzheimer's disease. They found a 60 percent lower incidence among such people. The difference was especially pronounced in those considered genetically at risk for the disorder. The exercising group exerted themselves enough to break a sweat and have some strained breathing, typically by way of walking or bicycling. The study involved almost 1,500 elderly for 15 years.¹⁰

1. Reuters, Oct. 4, 2005, reporting on the work of Dr Miia Kivipelto. The study is published in *Lancet Neurology*, November 2005;4(11):705-711.

Inherited Stress

A Swedish study of nearly 6,000 children concludes that the risk of a child suffering from type 1 diabetes increases when the mother is under a high level of stress. Researchers found a threefold increase in diabetes-related autoimmune reactions when the mothers were undergoing a divorce or domestic violence. The average age of the children was about 2.5 years.¹¹ It is thought that the mothers transfer some of the stress to their children, either subconsciously or overtly, triggering the response.

1. *Diabetes Care*, October 2005.

Play for Growth

A study of children whose growth (mental and physical) had been stunted by malnutrition¹² has yielded some interesting insights on how to improve academic performance in such situations. While nutritional supplementation was beneficial, more permanent and stronger improvements were seen when combined with psychosocial stimulation, in the form of play and other increased interactions with the child's mother. Community workers encouraged the interaction during the child's second year

of life, and as a result, researchers say that at age 18, scores were better than expected in IQ, reading and math, and the children were less likely to drop out of school.

1. *The Lancet*, Oct. 19, 2005.
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Alcohol, Smoking, and Mental Function

In a new study of mental decline among alcoholics, researchers from the University of Michigan report a correlation between mental deficit and smoking. In fact, their results suggest smoking is a greater contributor to decreased brain performance than alcohol. While smokers often report a feeling of alertness and clearer thinking while using tobacco, this report suggests chronic use may have the opposite effect, perhaps involving some kind of neurological adaptation or a long-term oxygen deprivation of brain cells. Alcoholics are nearly three times as likely to smoke cigarettes as the general population.¹³

1. Reuters, Oct. 24, 2005, reporting on the work of Dr. Jennifer Glass of the University of Michigan's Addiction Research Center.

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