

The China Study

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1 Background and Personal History

In the first part of the book he tells of his history on a dairy farm as a child and how at that time the thinking was that the more protein the better and that cow milk is good as it has calcium.

He also goes into detail on the academic background and atmosphere at the time.

Then he tells us of his time in the Philippines where his goal was to aid in solving nutrition problems for the children over there by adding protein to their diet. The problem was that he noticed that the better off children had more liver cancer. Eventually he tracked this down to the relative more protein that they were eating along side aflatoxin that originated from a mold that grows on peanuts. He then found a paper from India that found that mice that had more protein were more likely to get liver cancer.

Part I

The China Study

2 Lab Work

As this paper from India made no sense in the eyes of the researchers of the time, but did line up with his observations of the children he saw, he set out to test this in the lab for himself, along with students and team.

The findings were:

1. When feeding mice 5% milk protein (casein), the level of aflatoxin did not matter, the mice did not get cancer (in fact fatter).
2. When they fed the mice 20% (of calories) from casein they all got cancer when exposed to aflatoxin.
3. Plant protein did not have this effect.
4. They could “turn” cancer on/off in the same mice by switching them from one diet to the other including putting the cancer in total remission.
5. The same effect was produced in rats and with pancreatic cancer with response to HBV (Hepatitis B Virus).
6. There are many more experiments described in the book as they did experiments for some decades. This includes following mice for over 2 years and playing with the diet in that time and many more. All experiments indicate that animal protein along with exposure to a carcinogen will cause cancer while the absence of such protein will prevent the cancer regardless of the presence of the carcinogen.

3 The China Study

This is the well known study run in rural China that took data on the prevalence of cancer and other health issues in rural China and correlated them with many data points collected on the same people with respect to their diet. In short these correlations lined up perfectly with the data from the lab experiments indicating that the same effects are present in humans. The power of this is that this is not only a large epidemiological study. Its results also have an experimental causation effect demonstrated in the lab. Although this is not a double blind placebo controlled crossover study. The strength of the effect is high due to the alignment to the lab tests

3.1 The problem with the Atkins diet

The first point of all the low carbohydrate diets is that “America has been testing this for the last so and so decades, and it is not proving to be a good idea”. The one problem with this statement is that although true that the recommendation is that Americans eat a low fat diet, this is not what has been happening. There are studies proving that the Atkins diet works to reduce weight in obese people, and even reduce their cholesterol levels. What is not so publicly displayed is that in the studies the caloric restriction was very harsh (35% under the regular caloric intake 2250 -> 1450). This is not sustainable. This is not to mention that in the same study 68% of the people reported constipation 63% reported bad breath 51% reported headaches 10% reported hair loss. So this is not looking too healthy, is it? In addition they refer to other papers where the same diet in children caused calcium oxalate to be present in their urine, which could lead to kidney stones. It could lead to women missing their period. Subjects having low vitamin levels and/or high cholesterol. The researchers found high levels of calcium in subjects' urine which could be associated with bone density loss.

In short not a good thing.

Part II

Disease of Affluence

In this part he goes in to various studies by other researchers on how a whole food plant based (WFPB) diet can stop and/or reverse/heal some of the most common and deadliest diseases of the west. He calls these diseases “disease of affluence” as they arise from affluence of over rich foods.

4 Heart

Heart he refers mainly to the work by Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn published in “Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease: The Revolutionary, Scientifically Proven, Nutrition-Based Cure” and to work by Dr. Dean Ornish. Both have an extensive and deep research showing how to treat heart disease with a WFPB diet. In Ornish's work the diet is accommodated with stress management practices mainly meditation. In Esselstyn's work there are group meetings every two weeks.

5 Obesity

Next there is a short chapter about obesity. The main point is that a WFPB diet will help one lose weight as it is not calorically dense, so you don't need to count calories etc...