

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY



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The world is seeing a rise in Type 2 diabetes—and its consequences—among younger and younger people.

BRAIN HEALTH

The Cognitive Consequences of Early Onset Diabetes

As diabetes strikes more young people, so too does cognitive decline, researchers warn

By Sheramy Tsai

The escalating trend of early-onset Type 2 diabetes brings a hidden peril: Those living longer with the disease show signs of brain structure changes, potentially setting the stage for cognitive challenges such as dementia at younger ages.

The Silent Effects of Type 2 Diabetes on Brain Health

Most think of blood sugar charts and in-

sulin injections when “diabetes” comes to mind. Yet, this condition has broader implications—particularly on the brain.

A recent study on Pima American Indians—known for their high rates of Type 2 diabetes—revealed unsettling results. Those with long-term diabetes showed significant brain changes, such as decreased cortical thickness and an increase in white matter hyperintensities, often linked to early dementia signs.

“This is among the first times that alterations of the brain’s structure have been associated with duration of diabe-



Overloaded

Chronic high blood sugar levels can disrupt the brain’s networks.

tes,” Evan Reynolds, research fellow and lead statistician for the NeuroNetwork for Emerging Therapies at Michigan Medicine and first author of the study, said in a statement.

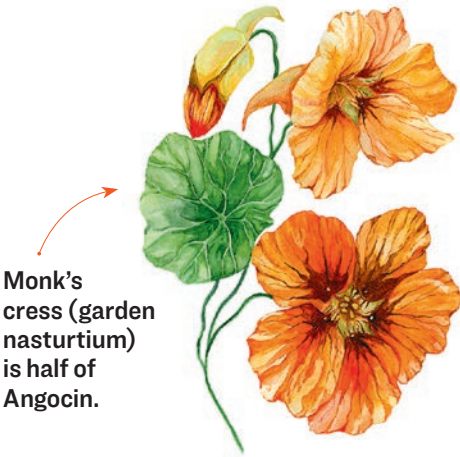
The study also found that diabetes complications, such as chronic kidney disease and nerve damage to the heart, were strongly associated with these negative brain changes.

Yet, puzzlingly, the cognitive function of these participants didn’t align directly with the physical alterations in their brains.

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German Herbal Drug Comparable to Antibiotics, and Safer



Monk's cress (garden nasturtium) is half of Angocin.

Simple medicinal made of 2 plants shows efficacy for sinusitis, bronchitis, and UTIs

Health Viewpoints

Angocin, an herbal medicine produced and sold in Germany, has only two active ingredients: monk's cress powder, also known as garden nasturtium, and

horseradish root powder. This medicinal has been sold and studied overseas for nearly two decades.

Research cited in the National Library of Medicine finds that its effects are comparable to those of common antibiotics, with an invaluable perk—it's significantly safer. Even better, you can make this effective remedy at home, no prescription necessary.

The synergistic combination of garden nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) and horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*) has

antimicrobial, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties.

Garden nasturtium brims with vitamin C and minerals including potassium, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, zinc, copper, and iron.

Horseradish, as a root vegetable, boasts high nutritional value itself—rich in dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Its bioactive compounds, such as polyphenols, phenols, flavonoids, and vitamin C, are responsible for its

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EMF

The Invisible Hazard

PART 5WAYS TO MITIGATE COMMON HOUSEHOLD EMFS

Modern homes and electronics generate a wide range of electromagnetic radiation but you can limit exposure

Consider turning off Wi-Fi modems and putting mobile phones and wireless devices in airplane mode before bed.

In this series, we explore the health effects of electromagnetic fields, an omnipresent radiation created by technologies ranging from common home electronics to 5G towers.



Previous Parts:
TheEpochtim.es/EMF

By Marina Zhang

The TV in your living room, the smartwatch on your wrist, and even the LED lamp on your desk—there are numerous overlooked sources of manmade electromagnetic fields (EMF) in our homes that could contribute to the mysterious symptoms that some people experience. The good news is that there are ways to minimize these risks.

Sources of EMFs in the Home Although the human body emits its own EMFs, it's also vulnerable and susceptible to certain external EMFs. There are two common sources of EMFs in the home:

- **RADIOFREQUENCY (RF) RADIATION** produced from wireless communication signaling.
- **EXTREMELY LOW-FREQUENCY (ELF) RADIATION** produced by electricity.

EMFs From Wireless Electronics

EMITTED BY: mobile phones, Wi-Fi modems, Bluetooth devices, TVs (use radio waves), smartwatches, smart virtual assistants such as Alexa, smart lighting, and all other "smart" electronics

Everything is "smart" now, even many of our wristwatches.

Wireless and smart devices connect to mobile networks through radiofrequency radiation. Most radio frequencies have a frequency between 3 kHz (kilohertz) to 300 GHz (gigahertz).

Despite the convenience that radio frequencies bring to people's lives, studies have shown that they may cause harm. Radio frequencies have been associated with brain and breast cancer and impaired sperm health in human studies.

However, not all radio frequencies have the same health impact.

In the past, analog radios and 1G, the first-generation mobile network, sent forth continuous signals. But most of today's radio frequencies are digital, which is considered more harmful.

"Typically, the higher the frequency of a signal, the more reduced its ability to penetrate," James Finn, president, principal electromagnetic interference engineering consultant, and senior consultant for EMFs at Elexana, told The Epoch Times. "A signal at 28 GHz or higher would have difficulties going through a brick façade."

While 5G, the most recent mobile network, has been advertised as less penetrating because of having a higher frequency than 3G and 4G, Mr. Finn said that this may not entirely be the case.

Leaves and rain can block certain 5G frequencies, but the network covers a broad range of 600 MHz to 39 GHz, which overlaps with 3G and 4G frequencies. Lower-band 5G frequencies (at 600 MHz to 1 GHz) may still penetrate brick walls and concrete.

NEXT WEEK

Small 5G cells may be linked to unexplained symptoms.

WAYS TO REDUCE ELF MAGNETIC AND ELECTRIC FIELD EXPOSURE

- **INSPECT YOUR ELECTRICAL WIRING:** Hire an electrician to inspect your home's wiring to see if it's properly grounded and ensure there are no errors or safety issues.
- **AVOID POWER LINES:** Live and sleep far away from power lines, as they can produce strong magnetic fields and ground currents.
- **USE A GAUSS METER:** A gauss meter is a device that measures magnetic fields to identify areas with higher field strengths.
- **MAINTAIN DISTANCE:** Maintain a 6- to 8-foot distance from larger electronic appliances and devices and electrical equipment when in use to reduce your exposure, Mr. Finn said.
- **REPLACE DAMAGED APPLIANCES AND USE THREE-PRONGED CORDED DEVICES:** Replace two-pronged corded electrical devices with three-pronged corded versions, if possible. An electrician may be able to add the ground prong to the power cord, if needed. Consider replacing electronic appliances that have damaged wiring or signs of malfunctions to prevent shock hazards.
- **TURN OFF ELECTRICITY IN THE BEDROOM:** In most cases, turning off electricity in the room can reduce EMFs and may be helpful for electro-sensitive individuals. However, on rare occasions, this can actually strengthen the electric fields because of the wiring setup in the home. If the room has wires that run adjacent and opposite to each other, turning off the electricity in one wire may intensify the electric field in the other.
- **USE VOLTMETERS:** Voltmeters can be used to detect electric fields.



Devices with three-pronged cords emit smaller electric fields.

Any device using diodes inevitably produces EMI. Diodes are commonly used in electronics to convert AC to DC.

LED lights are one of the most common light sources that use diodes to produce light. The acronym "LED" stands for light-emitting diode.

Wi-Fi, smart meters, and devices that release radio frequencies can also produce EMI because of the interactions between radiofrequency signals.

Fluorescent lights and variable-speed motors used in pool pumps and air conditioners first convert AC electricity to DC, and then back to AC electricity. Electricity produced by solar panels similarly goes through a series of conversions, creating EMI. Light dimmer switches don't create signal noise through conversions. Instead, they chop up certain AC waves coming into the lamp, producing noise signals in the output.

Prolonged exposure to this noise might have adverse health effects. Ms. Havas's research has shown that diabetics exposed to signal noise have higher blood sugars and insulin levels than when they were in an environment free of such noise. Other research from Iran indicates that signal noise may increase susceptibility to neurodegenerative diseases. Certain sources of signal noise may be more biologically offensive than others. For instance, an Australian study found that after smart meters were made mandatory in Victoria between 2006 and 2013, more than 140 people complained of symptoms that they attributed to the smart meter.

LED lights have also been reported to impair sleep by influencing circadian rhythm and suppressing melatonin production.

Ways to Reduce Electromagnetic Interference Exposure

- **ENSURE PROPER GROUNDING:** Improper grounding can exacerbate EMI.
- **MINIMIZE CERTAIN ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Reduce the use of or replace electronic devices that produce signal noise, such as LED and fluorescent lights, with incandescent lights. Incandescent lights are the closest to natural light because the light is produced from electricity heating a filament.
- **POWER OFF DEVICES:** Turn off electronic devices and appliances when not in use or while you're sleeping.
- **CONSULT A CERTIFIED BUILDING BIOLOGY INSTITUTE ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION SPECIALIST (EMRS):** Engage the expertise of an EMRS to identify the primary sources of actionable EMF and EMI in your living or working environment.

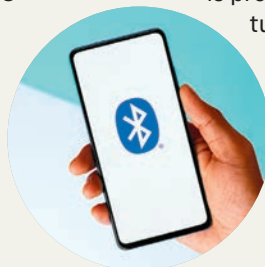
Be an Electronic Minimalist

- Where possible, replace devices that produce signal noise, such as LED and fluorescent lights.
- Use wired connections rather than wireless whenever you have the option.
- If in doubt, hire an electrician to make sure your home's wiring is all properly grounded.

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WAYS TO REDUCE RADIO FREQUENCY EXPOSURE

- **OPT FOR HARDWIRING:** Dr. David Carpenter, a professor in environmental health from the University of Albany, suggests the use of ethernet cables and cabled landlines for internet and phone connections, minimizing reliance on wireless signals in the home and reducing radiofrequency exposure.
- **REPLACE BLUETOOTH EARPHONES:** Replace Bluetooth earphones by putting the phone on speaker or using wired earphones to keep radiofrequency radiation away from your head.
- **GO 'UNSMART':** Minimize the use of smart devices such as smart thermostats, smart blenders, and smart watches.
- **TAKE BEDTIME PRECAUTIONS:** Bedtime is when the body rests and heals itself from all the stress it experienced during the day, Professor Emerita Magda Havas from Trent University told The Epoch Times. Consider turning off Wi-Fi modems and putting mobile phones and wireless devices in airplane mode before bed.
- **CHECK FOR NEARBY WIRELESS ANTENNAS:** Ensure that no small cells (base stations) or cell phone towers are installed near your home, as their signals can contribute to higher RF radiation exposure. With the rollout of the 5G network, people increasingly find 5G small cells planted near their homes. In the next article, we will discuss ways to be on the lookout for 5G small-cell installations.
- **USE RF METERS:** RF meters, or radio-frequency meters, can detect the overall intensity of radio frequencies in the home and help to identify sources of intense radiofrequency radiation, allowing for informed mitigation measures.



Turn off devices, or optional signals, when not in use.

If the power cord is damaged, causing the two wires to separate, or if the wrong neutral and hot wires are paired, the magnetic fields won't cancel each other out, resulting in intensified magnetic field emissions.

Electrical appliances with motors also tend to produce strong magnetic fields. These can include appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers, hair dryers, and anything that produces heat or has moving parts that use electric motors.

It's worth noting that ELF magnetic fields were classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in 2002 as "possible carcinogens" to humans.

Magnetic fields generated from power lines have been associated with an increased risk of childhood leukemia. Occupational exposures to magnetic fields have also been linked with breast cancer in epidemiological studies.

ELF Electric Fields

When a lamp is plugged into a power outlet, an electric field will emanate from the wall outlet down the lamp's power cord and all the way up to the light bulb. The magnetic field, however, is produced only once the lamp is turned on.

Properly grounded devices and appliances with three-pronged cords (the third prong is a ground conductor) will emit smaller electric fields than those with only two prongs.

In the United States, devices with 120 volts or less aren't required to have a grounding prong, so some manufacturers opt for compact, lightweight, and

ungrounded plugs. These products are usually insulated to protect users from live parts. Yet water breaches can cause dangerous shocks.

Mr. Finn, who has more than 30 years of experience working with electromagnetic interference, emphasized the importance of checking for proper grounding and bonding, and verifying that the grounding rod has a resistance below 25 ohms.

The grounding rod links your home's electrical wiring back to the earth, which allows any problematic current to dissipate in the ground. This rod, planted deeply in the dirt, is connected through a thick copper wire to your home's electrical panel, which is where electricity comes into your home from the electrical grid.

The lower the resistance of the grounding rod, the easier it is for electricity to pass through it.

"If the ground conductor from the main panel is not properly connected to the ground rod and the ground rod is oxidized, meaning rusted, the grounding system may not be sufficient to shunt electric fields," Mr. Finn said.

There has been little research linking ELF electric fields to potential biological effects. However, some people who are sensitive to EMFs have also reported symptoms related to electric fields. Animal studies suggest that ELF electric field exposures may affect sleep.

To find the studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpochTimes.com

Benefits of Many Cancer Drugs Are Uncertain: Study

Drugs approved with limited evidence of effectiveness not supported by long-term patient outcomes, research finds

By Mary Gillis

The effects of expensive cancer drugs may fall short of achieving the long-term health benefits they're designed to create, according to an extensive new study that examined dozens of clinical trials published in Clinical Drug Investigation.

Most Cancer Drug Benefits Are Uncertain

A team of researchers at the University of Gothenburg pored over claim reimbursement data in 40 clinical trials. While claim reports showed medicines to treat renal, lung, breast, and other cancers had therapeutic value, there was little evidence to support that the drugs

were beneficial in the long run.

Results from just seven of the 40 trials showed that drugs played a significant role in extending patient survival rates. Only four were linked to improved quality of life.

Deeper analyses focused on an average 6.6-year follow-up from data collected between 2010 and 2020 in Sweden. Researchers looked at 22 drugs aimed at treating nine cancers: renal cell carcinoma, Hodg-

kin's Lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, chronic myeloid leukemia, melanoma, non-small cell lung cancer, breast

cancer, ovarian fallopian tube cancer, and medullary thyroid cancer.

Only seven of the 22 drug indications had at least one trial showing conclusive evidence of overall survival rate and quality of life. The remaining 15 either didn't include data on overall survival or quality of life, or they played no significant role in improving either.

"We have shown that the majority of the drugs launched with limited evidence still lack clear evidence of how they actually affect survival and quality of life in

patients," lead author Gabriella Chauca Strand, a doctoral student at Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, said in a statement.

"The lack of confirmatory evidence for important patient outcomes is problematic and creates uncertainty about how these drugs actually contribute to meaningful patient benefit, and ultimately how effectively resources are being used within health care."

Questions Raised

This raises the question of potential and significant flaws in the health care system. An estimated 18.1 million people worldwide had cancer (excluding nonmelanoma

skin cancer) in 2020. To meet the treatment demand and quickly get drugs to market, most clinical trials focus on changes in biomarkers to prove that a medicine is successful but don't include measures based on longevity. Reimbursement decisions are also based on cancer-specific biomarkers. Focusing solely on biomarkers isn't enough to justify reimbursement from third-party payers, the authors argue in the paper.

The cost of cancer treatment places a tremendous financial burden on patients, families, and the health care system. According to a 2021 study, treatments and care for the top 15 leading cancers in the United States cost more than \$156 billion in 2018. Another study, published in 2020, showed

that the total cost of cancer in Europe was 199 billion euros (about \$217 billion) in 2018. Health costs for all types of cancer care were 103 billion euros (about \$112 billion), with 32 billion euros (about \$35 billion) explicitly spent on cancer drugs.

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death in both the United States and Europe (after heart disease in the United States and diseases of the circulatory system in Europe).

Given the challenges of limited resources within health systems and the increasing disease burden, ensuring value for the cost should be an essential public health goal, the study authors wrote. Implementing expensive treatments with unclear effec-

tiveness adversely affects not only patients with cancer, but it may also affect monies available for other patients suffering from disease, they wrote.

The study shows the urgent need for discussion about how cancer treatment is increasingly taking up limited resources within health systems and which drugs should be approved for reimbursement, the study authors concluded.

Mary Elizabeth Gillis is a health reporter and cardiopulmonary specialist with over a decade of experience. After graduating with her doctorate in applied physiology, she earned a master of science degree in journalism from Columbia University.

The Ultimate Guide to KICKING SUGAR

PART 3 | MONK FRUIT: A NATURAL SWEETENER WITH MEDICINAL EFFECTS

Research shows that monk fruit and its key sweetening compound can have therapeutic effects against COVID, diabetes, and cancer

➔ *In this series, we explore the good and bad sugars and sweeteners, including popular natural ones, uncover the unexpected outcomes of cutting out sugar, and discover the ultimate way to do so.*



Previous Parts:
TheEpochtim.es
/KickingSugar

By Flora Zhao

Following in stevia's footsteps, monk fruit has gained widespread attention as a natural sweetener. One significant benefit of this sweetener is that it can manage blood sugar and lipid levels. It also might have antiviral effects against COVID-19 and even anti-cancer properties.

Monk fruit, also known as *luo han guo*, is primarily produced in southern China, and its fruit resembles a small melon on the outside. The Chinese have used it for centuries as a natural sweetener and traditional medicine.

According to a review article in *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, monk fruit contains various nutritious compounds, including mogrosides, vitamin C, trace elements, linolenic acid, and other unsaturated fatty acids.

"Monk fruit does actually contain natural sugars. Those are mainly fructose and glucose. However, unlike most fruit, the natural sugars from monk fruit aren't really responsible for the sweetness. Instead, the intense sweetness comes from a group of compounds called mogrosides," Taylor Wallace, an adjunct associate professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University and CEO at the Think Healthy Group LLC, said in an interview with *The Epoch Times*.

"The extracted mogrosides from monk fruit, obtained through processing, don't necessarily contain fructose or glucose. So these are very similar compounds to what you would see in other high-intensity sweeteners," Mr. Wallace said.

➔ Monk fruit is primarily produced in southern China and its fruit resembles a small melon on the outside.



Mogrosides are 200 to 350 times sweeter than sucrose, and monk fruit sweetener is essentially derived from mogrosides. Mogrosides account for about 1.2 percent of the fresh monk fruit and 3.8 percent of dried fruit powder, according to a review published in *Molecules*.

"Mogroside, as a natural sweetener derived from plants, is a series of molecules, and the taste of these molecules is different," Nate Yates, vice president of the Global Sugar Reduction Platform at Ingredion Inc., told *The Epoch Times*.

Mogroside V is the most abundant of the compounds, and ripe monk fruit is exceptionally sweet because of its high content of mogroside V, according to the *Molecules* review.

"After further refinement and extraction, the taste is more pure and pleasant," Mr. Yates said.

Monk Fruit Sugar's Anti-Diabetic Effects

Like stevia, monk fruit sugar is a zero-calorie sweetener. It is often described as having a taste similar to that of cane sugar, which is a high-calorie sweetener.

In a randomized controlled trial published by the *International Journal of Obesity* in 2017, 30 healthy men were asked to consume a standardized breakfast, and one hour before lunch, they were provided beverages containing sucrose, aspartame, stevia, or monk fruit sweetener. They were then allowed to choose their lunch from the options provided, and their dinner was recorded. In addition, blood draws and appetite measures were conducted at various points throughout the study.

The results showed that those who consumed beverages containing sucrose experienced an increase in blood sugar and insulin levels within an hour before a meal, and those who consumed beverages containing one of the other sweeteners, including monk fruit, did not.

After subsequent monitoring, the researchers concluded that natural sweeteners, including monk fruit sweetener, had the most negligible effect on post-meal blood sugar levels and insulin secretion compared with sucrose.

A recent systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Canadian researchers showed that in the short term, like water, beverages sweetened with non-caloric artificial or natural sweeteners didn't affect metabolism and endocrine function.

There is currently limited human research on monk fruit sweeteners, unlike on stevia. However, numerous cellular models

and animal experiments have indicated that mogrosides provide various beneficial effects for both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, according to a review published in the journal *Foods*.

Mogrosides have been shown to regulate lymphocyte antigens in Type 1 diabetic mice and exhibit therapeutic effects on symptoms. Monk fruit extract can also alleviate and repair damage to pancreatic beta cells and promote insulin secretion, according to the *Frontiers in Pharmacology* review.

According to the *Molecules* review, mogrosides have been found to effectively reduce blood sugar and lipid levels in people with Type 2 diabetes. In a study involving mice with diabetes, those given monk fruit extract or mogrosides experienced significant decreases in fasting blood sugar, glycated serum protein, and insulin resistance.

The treatment also resulted in a reduction in LDL cholesterol and an increase in HDL cholesterol levels. Additionally, mogrosides can alleviate symptoms of diabetic neuropathy, according to the *Frontiers in Pharmacology* review.

Monk fruit beverages, made from monk fruit powder and water, have already been granted patent registrations in China. The review published in *Frontiers in Pharmacology* suggested that such drinks are suitable for treating diabetes.

Moreover, according to the

Foods review, the flavonoid compounds found in monk fruit can significantly lower blood sugar levels and protect the pancreas, while the polysaccharides can ameliorate lipid disorders and reduce plasma glucose levels.

Potential Benefits of Monk Fruit Against COVID-19

The monk fruit has long been used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to treat cough, sore throat, bronchitis, and asthma. According to the *Frontiers in Pharmacology* review, records of its effectiveness in relieving phlegm, alleviating pain, clearing heat, and moisturizing the lungs—to use some terms from TCM—can be traced back 2,000 years.

"In particular, during the summer, it is recommended to consume monk fruit when experiencing symptoms such as sore throat, throat discomfort, or cough," Jonathan Liu, a professor of Chinese medicine at Georgian College and the director of Liu's Wisdom Healing Centre in Canada, told *The Epoch Times*.

A study published in *Frontiers in Endocrinology* in 2022 demonstrated that mogroside V can effectively target multiple sites of COVID-19, potentially helping treat those infected with the virus.

Mogrosides can also inhibit the release of inflammatory factors, effectively suppressing and reducing pulmonary fibrosis.

According to the *Molecules* review, numerous animal studies have demonstrated



Monk fruit gets its sweetness from compounds called mogrosides that have medicinal qualities.

XUJIAN/GETTY IMAGES

that monk fruit extract can significantly inhibit cough and enhance sputum excretion. It also possesses anti-inflammatory properties and can help manage asthma. Additionally, mogrosides show a protective effect against acute lung injury.

Anti-Cancer, Anti-Inflammatory, and Antioxidant Properties

Mogrosides Exhibit Anti-Cancer Properties

Mogrosides exhibit comprehensive anti-cancer activities, as evidenced by various experiments. According to the review in *Foods*, they can inhibit the invasion and migration of lung cancer cells, induce cell apoptosis, and impede the proliferation of colorectal and laryngeal cancer cells. Moreover, mogrosides can disturb the growth cycle of pancreatic cancer cells and cause cell death. According to the *Frontiers in Pharmacology* review, monk fruit extract has also been found to have inhibitory effects on liver cancer.

Additionally, mogrosides can help inhibit the toxicity of carcinogens, according to a paper published in *Cancer Letters*. For instance, they can help prevent skin cancer induced by exposure to certain chemicals, according to commentary published in *Future Medicinal Chemistry*.

Animal studies mentioned in the *Cancer Letters* paper have shown that phytochemicals in monk fruit can even directly kill tumor cells.

Monk Fruit Benefits the Brain and Nervous System

Mogrosides can alleviate neuroinflammation in brain cells and help manage Alzheimer's disease, according to the *Molecules* review. They can also reduce

memory impairments and prevent hippocampus apoptosis. In addition, animal studies mentioned in the *Foods* review have shown that mogrosides can effectively improve schizophrenic behaviors in mice and modulate partial permanent impairment of the nervous system.

Monk Fruit Acts as an Antioxidant

The *Molecules* review states that mogrosides are antioxidant agents, enabling them to scavenge reactive oxygen species and protect cells. They can also inhibit DNA oxidative damage, thereby slowing the aging process. Additionally, mogrosides demonstrate significant protective effects against exercise-induced tissue damage, including cardiac injury. The *Foods* review indicated they could also improve nonalcoholic fatty liver disease by preventing liver fat accumulation and inhibiting lipid peroxidation.

In addition, the flavonoids and polysaccharides found in monk fruit also show vigorous antioxidant activity.

Who Should Avoid Consuming Monk Fruit Sugar?

"Monk fruit sweetener seems to be fairly safe, though it undergoes an artificial extraction process," Mr. Wallace said.

According to the information published by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, monk fruit extract is classified as "generally recognized as safe." However, no specific acceptable daily intake has been established for monk fruit extract, which is typical because evidence of the ingredient's safety is established for amounts well above that needed to achieve the desired effect in food.

According to TCM, monk fruit is considered to have a slightly cold nature and is associated with minimal side effects. However, Mr. Liu advised that people with cold

In particular, during the summer, it is recommended to consume monk fruit when experiencing symptoms such as sore throat, throat discomfort, or cough.

Jonathan Liu, professor of Chinese medicine, Georgian College

constitutions, such as those who frequently experience loose stools, have a large, pale tongue, or exhibit prominent tooth marks on the edges of the tongue, may want to avoid monk fruit consumption.

In addition, monk fruit belongs to the Cucurbitaceae family, which includes common plants such as cucumber, zucchini, pumpkin, and melon. Therefore, people allergic to these foods are more likely to be allergic to monk fruit.

Selecting Monk Fruit Sweeteners: Considerations and Challenges

Monk fruit offers numerous health benefits, but its cultivation can be challenging. It has low germination rates and requires specific environmental conditions for successful growth.

Fresh monk fruit is also tough to store and rarely seen in the market. However, dried monk fruit can be found in some Asian grocery stores, Chinese herbal medicine stores, and online.

The traditional drying method for monk fruit involves high-temperature hot air drying. However, in recent years, there has been a rise in the use of low-temperature freeze-drying for dried monk fruit, which helps retain a higher concentration of beneficial compounds, especially mogrosides.

Because of its high sweetness, solid powdered monk fruit sweeteners commonly found in supermarkets are often mixed with other substances such as erythritol, and some products may even contain sucrose. Monk fruit may only account for about 1 percent of the composition of these products.



HOMEMADE MONK FRUIT SYRUP AND TEA

You can make your own monk fruit syrup at home using dried monk fruit.

STEPS

1. Remove the peel of the monk fruit and extract the flesh and seeds. Soak the monk fruit flesh and seeds in 194 F (90 C) water for 30 minutes at a ratio of 1 gram of dried fruit to 15 milliliters of water, as described in the *Foods* review. Then, strain the liquid and store it for later use.
2. Afterward, you can pour in fresh hot water and continue soaking the flesh and seeds, but remember to extend the soaking time appropriately with each subsequent infusion.
3. By boiling the infused monk fruit water, you can reduce it to obtain monk fruit syrup.

Another simple way to incorporate monk fruit is by adding dried monk fruit to your tea during brewing. This makes the tea sweeter and provides the benefits of monk fruit's compounds.

You can also get all the health benefits of monk fruit by making it into a tea.



NEXT WEEK

Here comes the most controversial and popular sugar.

AGE WELL

8 Habits That Could Add Decades to Your Life

Study quantifies the extra years we can gain by following common sense wisdom and the latest research

By George Citroner

In the quest for the Fountain of Youth, science has unveiled a treasure trove of lifestyle tips that may lead to extra decades of vitality. Unlocking the secret to a longer life might be simpler than you think, a new study suggests.

Making eight specific changes by middle age may be just what we need to do, ac-

cording to research presented at Nutrition 2023, the annual meeting of the American Society for Nutrition.

"We were really surprised by just how much could be gained with the adoption of one, two, three, or all eight lifestyle factors," Xuan-Mai T. Nguyen, study author and a health science specialist at the Department of Veterans Affairs, said in a statement.

The Bottom Line

The study analyzed the medical records of nearly 720,000 U.S. veterans. Men who followed all eight practices by age 40 were predicted to add an average of 24 years

to their lives compared with people who didn't have the habits. Women who did the same were predicted to add 21 years to their lives.

Inactivity, opioid use, and smoking were the most significant contributors to a shortening lifespan, according to the research. These factors increased the risk of death during the study period by 30 to 45 percent.

Other unhealthy behaviors such as chronic stress, binge drinking, poor diet, and inadequate sleep increased mortality risk by about 20 percent. A dearth of positive social connections was linked to a 5 percent increase in this risk.

Habits That Add Years to Your Life

The lifestyle habits highlighted by researchers reflect practical wisdom and evidence-based guidance for maintaining good health.

So what are the eight secrets to a long life?

1. Be Physically Active

Regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. The Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 150 minutes per week of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, along with muscle-strengthening exercises twice a week.

2. Avoid Opioids

Opioid addiction damages health over the long term. Repeated use can harm the liver and kidneys and often worsens chronic pain, leading to greater dependence.

3. Don't Binge Drink

Binge drinking, defined as four or more drinks for women and five or more for men on one occasion, can lead to liver damage, cardiovascular disease, and several types of cancer.

4. Don't Smoke

Tobacco use is responsible for about 1,300 deaths a day in the United States—more than 480,000 deaths annually—according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This bad habit contributes to up to 90 percent of lung cancer deaths. Smoking also weakens the immune system and significantly increases the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cardiovascular disease.

5. Eat a Healthy Diet

A nutritious diet full of whole, minimally

processed foods ensures the body gets all the vitamins, minerals, and fiber it requires.

The Mediterranean diet encourages eating plant-based foods and healthy fats while limiting meat consumption to small portions, Emily Feivor, a registered dietitian at Long Island Jewish Forest Hills in Queens, New York, who recommends the diet, told *The Epoch Times*.

"Eggs are a good source of high-quality protein, and the whites can be enjoyed by those looking to reduce saturated fat intake," Ms. Feivor added.

6. Manage Stress

Chronic stress can damage health over time by increasing blood pressure and contributing to heart disease, diabetes, sleep issues, and pain. It can even weaken the immune system, making the body more

susceptible to infections and illnesses.

7. Practice Good Sleep Habits

"[Poor sleep] can also increase inflammation in the body, which can lead to various chronic diseases, including heart disease," Dr. Thomas Kilkenny, director of the Institute for Sleep Medicine at Staten Island University Hospital, said. But that's not the only way poor sleep can affect health and life expectancy.

Several major accidents in world history have been linked to human error due to the lack of sleep, according to Dr. Kilkenny, including the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

8. Maintain Positive Social Relationships

Strong social ties are linked to reduced risk of chronic illness, lower stress, enhanced

immunity, and increased lifespan.

A recently published meta-analysis of 90 studies, including more than 2.2 million people observed for up to 25 years, found a 32 percent higher risk of death due to any cause for socially isolated people. Participants who said they felt lonely had a 14 percent higher risk of dying prematurely than those who didn't.



Enjoy a longer, healthier life by avoiding common killers and adopting revitalizing habits.

SBELLOTT/SHUTTERSTOCK

BRAIN HEALTH

The Cognitive Consequences of Early Onset Diabetes

Continued from Page 1

“The brain cortex controls several functional domains,” the authors told The Epoch Times. “It is possible that cortical thinning occurs well ahead of anticipated cognitive changes, so we observed the former but not the latter.”

The Alarming Rise in Youth Diabetes

Worldwide, Type 2 diabetes is increasingly affecting younger demographics—a concerning trend given recent findings. Consider the implications: An individual diagnosed in their 20s may face severe brain changes by their 40s.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that Type 2 diabetes diagnoses in children aged 10 to 19 have doubled since 2003. Projections suggest a 673 percent rise in young patients by 2060, with non-Hispanic Black youth disproportionately affected.

“Increases in diabetes—especially among young people—are always worrisome, but these numbers are alarming,” Christopher Holliday, current director for the Division of Diabetes Translation at the CDC, said in a statement.

While poor diets, inactivity, and obesity have traditionally been linked to diabetes, a recent twist adds to the concern. A 2023 JAMA Network Open study found that contracting COVID-19 raises the diabetes risk by 5 percent.

This early diabetes onset is ominous for brain health. Prolonged periods of elevated blood sugar and insulin resistance can hasten cognitive decline. Young patients could, thus, confront these issues during their prime years, affecting their work and personal lives.

Dr. Dana Dabelea, a leading scholar on the youth onset of Type 2 diabetes and co-author of a pivotal study from SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth, warns of the looming crisis.

“Type 2 diabetes is a strong risk factor for cognitive decline. Given the increasing prevalence of Type 2 diabetes in the aging U.S. population, we could be on the cusp of a compounded epidemic of Type 2 diabetes and cognitive impairment syndromes,” she told The Epoch Times.

When diabetes is not controlled, too much sugar remains in the blood. Over time, this can damage organs, including the brain.

Alzheimer’s Association

“What’s even more alarming is the younger age at which these cognitive impairment syndromes might start appearing in adults with Type 2 diabetes due to the surge in youth-onset Type 2 diabetes.”

The Interplay Between Diabetes and Cognitive Decline

Diabetes affects more than just insulin. Chronic high blood sugar levels can disrupt the brain’s networks. Chronic inflammation, often spurred by diabetes, might be a key player in these cognitive shifts.

The connection between Type 2 diabetes and cognitive decline is increasingly evident, and Type 2 diabetes is now a recognized risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease. The Alzheimer’s



Diet and exercise can do much to prevent or reverse diabetes, preserving health and preventing dementia.

Association emphasized the dangers of prolonged high blood sugar in a February statement: “When diabetes is not controlled, too much sugar remains in the blood. Over time, this can damage organs, including the brain.”

Interestingly, Alzheimer’s patients and those with Type 2 diabetes have reduced brain capacity to use glucose—a hint at a potential link between the conditions. This has led some scientists to dub Alzheimer’s as “Type 3 diabetes.”

A JAMA study connected diabetes and rapid cognitive decline in seniors. Tracking 10,095 individuals, the results showed an early diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes hinted at higher dementia risk in the future. Those who battled diabetes for a decade or more before turning 70 were more than twice as likely to grapple with dementia than their nondiabetic peers.

“Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of age at onset of diabetes and cardiovascular comorbidity in persons with diabetes for risk of dementia,” the authors concluded.

Current Cognitive Screening Practices for Diabetics

Several notable professional bodies have addressed the intersection of diabetes and cognitive health.

Recent guidelines, particularly from the American Diabetes Association’s 2023 Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes, emphasize the importance of early detection screenings for cognitive impairment or dementia.

“Screening for early detection of mild cognitive impairment or dementia should be performed for adults 65 years or older at the initial visit, annually, and as appropriate,” the document reads. The Endocrine

Society echoes this sentiment, recommending a similar onset for cognitive evaluations at age 65.

While the spotlight on seniors is understandable, given the higher risks associated with aging, the pertinent question remains: Are younger adults with diabetes being overlooked? Recognizing the progressive nature of both diabetes and cognitive decline, the need for early detection and intervention is paramount.

Dr. Dabelea further highlights this gap. “I think we need better screening tools, tools which are less time-consuming, do not always require complex neuropsychological tests, are more accepted by patients (including younger patients),” she told The Epoch Times. “We need tools that are more accurate in identifying mild cognitive impairment, a condition that puts people at high risk to develop dementia, but is potentially reversible.”



Intermittent Fasting

Emerging research also suggests that meal timing, specifically intermittent fasting, can be a game-changer for many diabetics.

Natural Combat Strategies Beyond Medication

Modern health care has a rich toolkit for diabetes management. Still, many patients are now looking to reverse the disease, not just manage it.

“Currently, the major clinical focus in Type 2 diabetes patients is to control blood glucose levels using medication, which is not always successful. Patients with Type 2 diabetes frequently have other comorbid conditions, such as obesity, dyslipidemia (abnormal blood lipid profiles), and hypertension. We now recommend a more holistic approach,” the Pima study authors told The Epoch Times.

Natural strategies, from dietary shifts to physical activity, have shown promising results. Experts advocate for low-carb, high-fiber diets rich in whole foods. Processed items, refined sugars, and certain carbohydrates should be avoided.

Emerging research also suggests



BRAIN CHANGES

Research into populations known for high rates of Type 2 diabetes showed significant brain changes, including decreased cortical thickness and other changes linked to early dementia.



BEATING DIABETES

Exercise is the best known way to prevent dementia and can also help reverse diabetes. Exercising after a meal, even a walk, can reduce blood glucose levels.

EUGENE DUNSHKOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

that meal timing, specifically intermittent fasting, can be a game-changer for many diabetics.

“Type 2 diabetes need not be a life sentence. By adopting lifestyle changes, especially in diet and exercise, diabetes remission is attainable,” researcher Dongbo Liu said in a statement. “Our studies reveal that approaches like intermittent fasting and Chinese Medical Nutrition Therapy (CMNT) can induce diabetes remission. Such findings have significant implications, especially when considering the over 537 million global adults grappling with the condition.”

Regular physical activity remains essential, complemented by robust stress management strategies.

Embracing a holistic approach doesn’t just target the physical symptoms of diabetes. Emphasizing the importance of comprehensive wellness, these strategies can protect against potential cognitive decline.

German Herbal Drug Comparable to Antibiotics, and Safer

Continued from Page 1

antioxidant and prebiotic functions.

Combined, these two medicinal plants have proven efficacy.

Angocin is effective specifically against a type of antibiotic-resistant bacterial biofilm called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, commonly found in soil and water. It is the main cause of thousands of infections every year in health care settings. *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* can affect the blood, lungs, or other parts of the body after surgery and can cause pneumonia, fever and chills, chest pain, and other symptoms.

Used for many years in Germany, this remedy could be an important regimen for antibiotic-free treatment of infections in the United States. Volatile mustard oils are the phytotherapeutic compounds that produce Angocin’s antimicrobial power. A study published in Drug Research (Arzneimittelforschung) verifies Angocin’s broad antibacterial activities against those nasty pathogens.

Upper Respiratory Infections

Tonsillitis

The tonsils, along with the adenoids, are part of the lymphatic system and are the first line of defense of the body’s immune system.

It is commonly thought that tonsils are expendable. However, tonsils stop microbes from entering through the nose and the mouth and are filled with white blood cells responsible for killing germs.

Findings published in the Journal of Biological Regulators & Homeostatic Agents indicate that chronic exposure of the tonsils to microbes (viral or bacte-

rial) allows the immune system to learn its adversaries. This leads to a better distribution of the correct type and number of T-cells during an infection.

After a series of fatal outcomes from tonsillectomies in 2006 in Austria, Klaus Stelter, a German doctor and researcher, published in the German Society of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology a reminder to national and international ear, nose, and throat surgeons of their “great responsibility” when determining indications, especially in children, for tonsil removal.

He added that “actual major evidence-based studies on indications and effects [of tonsil removal] hardly exist.”

More than 500,000 of these surgeries, along with adenoidectomies, are performed each year in children under the age of 15 in the United States. Tonsillectomies are one of the most frequent and possibly unnecessary surgical procedures performed on children.

Angocin offers a much safer treatment of tonsillitis in children. Patients with contraindications or antibiotic resistance and those who don’t wish to take

antibiotics could especially benefit from this natural remedy. Research published in the European Archives of Oto-Rhino-Laryngology shows that mustard oils contained in the plants have antibacterial properties against gram-positive and gram-negative strains and that they have virostatic and antimycotic effects.

Sinusitis and Bronchitis

Acute sinusitis (rhinosinusitis) is the fifth most common reason for a visit to the doctor’s office.

About 100 million patients seek their health care provider for diagnosis and treatment of acute bronchitis each year. Ninety-five percent of these infections are caused by a virus for which 50–90 percent of patients are prescribed antibiotics.

Yet a 2020 study published in the American Family Physician finds no advantages to antibiotic treatment. According to the researchers, the potential benefits of the treatment don’t outweigh the harms.

Research concerning acute upper respiratory tract infections, published by the

Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health in 2021, also warns that antibiotics are over-prescribed.

In a German study published in Drug Research (Arzneimittelforschung), 858 children and adolescents partook in research investigating the efficacy of Angocin. The results were clear: The herbal drug performed as well as standard antibiotics in the treatment of acute sinusitis, acute bronchitis, and acute urinary tract infections, with a significantly lower potential for side effects than the pharmacological approach had.

The study also found that Angocin was effective in acute and chronic laryngopharyngitis.

Oropharyngeal Infections

Although oral health literacy has improved greatly in recent decades, dental hygiene in the United States has stayed the same. According to the National Institutes of Health’s 2022 Oral Health in America Report, tooth decay is present in 90 percent of adults aged 20 to 64, and periodontitis, or gum disease, affects almost 50 percent of adults aged 45 to 64.

A 2020 study in BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies argues that herbal treatment with garden nasturtium and horseradish has anti-microbial effects and can help treat oral pathogens and periodontitis. Researchers even write that the mixture offers “beneficial protective effects to prevent oral diseases such as caries, periodontitis, and peri-implantitis.”

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTI) are one

of the world’s most common infections and increasingly pose a global burden on public health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year 13,000 deaths are associated with UTIs in the United States. UTIs are 30 times more frequent in women than in men, and approximately 4 in 10 women who get a UTI will get at least one more within a six-month period.

A 2021 study in the Journal of Urology shows that “many women are fearful of the adverse effects of antibiotics and are frustrated with the medical profession for not addressing their fears and optimizing antibiotic stewardship.”

The researchers raised concerns about antibiotics as a prophylactic treatment, as suggested in the 2022-validated guidelines published by the American Urological Association (AUA).

Although international research recommends Angocin as a prophylactic, noting the long-standing reputation of the herbal remedy, the AUA refers only to cranberry as an alternative treatment.

Even in patients with catheters, Angocin proved valuable as a “promising alternative or supplement to conventional antibiotic therapy in the prevention of recurrence in patients with catheter-associated UTIs,” according to a 2021 German study conducted on 100 paralyzed patients.

Efficacy of Angocin

The Urological University Clinic at Heidelberg University in Germany explains on its website how Angocin works.

Both nasturtium and horseradish contain mustard oils (isothiocyanates)—phenethyl and allyl in horseradish and benzyl in nasturtium.

Glucosinolates release isothiocyanates, which causes direct antibacterial, antiviral, and fungistatic effects. Also, the mustard oils are completely reabsorbed in the small intestine, so neither the development of resistance nor damage to the body’s intestinal flora has been observed so far, according to the clinic’s website. Angocin also inhibits or inactivates the synthesis of bacterial toxins and strengthens the immune system.

The effective spectrum of herbal medicine is far-reaching and proven against well-known pathogens, including:

- **Bacteria:** staphylococci, streptococci, Enterococci, Acinetobacter, E. coli, Proteus, Enterobacter, H. influenzae.
- **Viruses:** rhinoviruses, influenza, Newcastle disease.
- **Fungi:** candida, some mold.

Counter Antimicrobial Resistance

The CDC warns of limited treatment options for multidrug-resistant types of bacteria, such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and of the increase in resistance, especially for people working in hospitals or nursing homes.

Given the worldwide challenges of antibiotic/antimicrobial resistance, herbal remedies such as Angocin provide not only hope but also a serious alterna-

tive to allopathic treatments of these infections.

Foster Herbal Remedies

As outlined above, studies prove not only that herbs have medicinal qualities, but also that they are much safer than antibiotics.

Consequently, some doctors of the medical community who are open to phytotherapeutics are calling for more research in the area of herbal medicine.

Additional studies of herbal medicine and phytotherapeutic compounds could promote collaborations between allopathic and naturopathic doctors, as well as herbalists, which could greatly benefit patients.

“This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent disease.”

The author encourages readers to continue to visit and to be treated by their health care professionals, including physicians. The author is not acting in the capacity of a doctor, licensed dietician-nutritionist, psychologist, or other licensed or registered medical professional. Accordingly, the author is not providing health care, medical, or nutrition therapy services and will not diagnose, treat, or cure in any manner whatsoever any disease, condition, or other physical or mental ailment.

Alexandra Roach is a board-certified holistic health practitioner, herbalist, and movement teacher who has also worked as a journalist, TV news anchor, and author. She has earned citations from U.S. Army commanders for her work with military personnel and writes with a broad perspective on health.

NO RX NEEDED—MAKE YOUR OWN REMEDY AT HOME

INGREDIENTS

Fresh garden nasturtium

Fresh horseradish root

Vodka

DIRECTIONS

Wash any soil debris or bugs from plants and roots

Cut flowers and leaves of garden nasturtium into small pieces

Cut horseradish root into 1/4-inch pieces

Layer in a bottle or jar

Fill with vodka and ensure that all herbal parts are submerged

Allow to sit for 4–6 weeks

Shake daily

After the extraction time is completed, strain the herbal tincture and pour it into brown or blue glass bottles. Store away from light. This tincture should be taken in small medicinal doses of 30 drops 3 times daily.*

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



Studies prove not only that herbs have medicinal qualities, but that they are much safer than antibiotics.

90

PERCENT of American adults aged 20 to 64 years are affected by tooth decay.

100

MILLION patients seek treatment for acute bronchitis each year.

PREPARING FOR A GOOD END

PART 7 FINDING PEACE BEFORE YOU DIE: WHAT MATTERS MOST

Of all the factors in dying well, saying four things to family and friends may offer the most profound peace

In this series, we'll examine ways of making meaning in the face of death, offering tools founded in traditional wisdom and scientific evidence to help our readers live well right to the very end.



Previous Parts:
TheEpochtim.es/
GoodEnd

By Sharleen Lucas

There's a story I won't forget from my time working as a registered nurse in our hospital's COVID-19 unit during the heat of the pandemic.

"Jerry" and "Debbie," both in their 80s, had been married for decades, raising kids and grandkids together. After struggling for two weeks to fight COVID-19, their organs were failing irreversibly. Family members agreed it was time to remove life support and let them die peacefully.

We rolled Jerry and Debbie into a room in our step-down isolation unit and snuggled their beds close, helping them find each other's hands. They knew they were side-by-side as their hands curled around each other.

An ICU nurse worked beyond her 12-hour shift to tend to any discomfort after the life support machines powered down. In a few hours, Jerry died, with Debbie close behind still holding her husband's hand.

The Human Longing for Closeness

"Ask a man who is being wheeled into transplant surgery or a woman facing chemotherapy for the third time what's on his or her mind and the answer will always involve the people they love," Dr. Ira Byock, a palliative care specialist, writes in "The Four Things That Matter Most." "Always."

As Jerry and Debbie drifted in and out during their final days and hours, hearing the voices of family and friends over video calls and lying next to each other during their last day, they likely thought of loved ones, those alive and long departed.

Dr. Byock said that, like most providers working with dying patients, he believes that humans long for closeness and emotional healing. Perhaps Mother Teresa said it best: "There's more hunger

for love and appreciation in this world than for bread."

Jackie's Convincing Story

In her blog called The Palliative Provocateur, Rebecca Gagne-Henderson, Ph.D., APRN, ACHPN, a palliative care specialist who has worked with dying patients for 27 years, tells a convincing story about this human hunger.

"Jackie," a local gang member, learned she was dying at age 22. Initially bitter and hostile, she slowly softened under the care of her kind hospice nurse, Pat. In a vulnerable moment, Jackie told Pat the one thing she wanted before dying was for her mom and dad to care for her together. Jackie's embittered parents had divorced 17 years earlier, leaving her and her siblings in the care of revolving family members.

Through the perseverance of the hospice chaplain, Jackie's parents miraculously agreed to stay with her for three days, bathing, changing, and feeding her, caring for her in a way Jackie likely dreamed of since she was 5. By the third day, the hate and anger between Jackie's parents melted, and the three wept together as they forgave each other.

The next day, Jackie, once rife with bitterness over dying, told Pat, "Now I can die, and it is OK. I did what I was supposed to do."

After caring for seriously ill and dying patients since 1978, Dr. Byock said he believes that "healing and wholeness are always possible," no matter how damaged a relationship is.

"The specter of death reveals our relationships to be our most precious possessions," he writes.

Jackie died peacefully within the week, "having found love, grace, forgiveness, and meaning," Ms. Gagne-Henderson wrote in her blog.

Four Things That Matter Most

After 27 years of tending to dying patients, Ms. Gagne-Henderson told The Epoch Times that spiritual distress (unresolved relational and existential pain) at the end of life causes the "ugliest deaths, much worse than physical pain."

We know a relationship is complete, Dr. Byock argues, "when we feel reconciled, whole, and at peace," which helps one avoid the distress of an "ugly death."

Dr. Byock said he is convinced that saying these four phrases may be the most

There's more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.

Mother Teresa

As our final days near, finding peace often means resolving any long-standing issues with loved ones.

Even in the most painful circumstances, those who reconcile their relationships express the feeling of finishing well—their life fulfilled.

potent way to bring emotional peace to the living and the dying alike:

Please forgive me.

I forgive you.

Thank you.

I love you.

"Using the four things," Dr. Byock writes, "we can deliberately decide to make our relationships whole. This can bring about a sense of completion before death is imminent."

This settling of emotional and mental turmoil makes saying goodbye less crucial because nothing important is left unsaid, completing the things that matter most to us. Even in the most painful circumstances, those who reconcile their relationships express the feeling of finishing well—their life fulfilled.

The 4 Things Are for The Living, Too

Finding meaning and reconciliation is essential to dying and living well. Death presses loved ones together like a pressure cooker, causing peace or turmoil. Dr. Byock encourages those seeking peace to pursue it sooner rather than

later, not waiting for the raw motivation of death to press in.

"I've lost count of the number of times I've met people in my office, an emergency room, hospital or a hospice program," he writes, "who have expressed deep regret over things they wish they had said."

This sentiment echoes Harriet Beecher Stowe's words, "The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone."

Lack of reconciliation creates a flowing undercurrent of spiritual distress that keeps nagging until one finds relational healing. For grievers of estranged, dead loved ones, an unresolved relationship causes complicated grief, a psychological term for survivors' long, arduous, and sometimes unresolved grieving processes.

When we embrace the four things earlier in our lives, they become an attitude we cultivate. According to Dr. Byock, we then internalize the phrases, repeating them to ourselves and our loved ones—"Please forgive me ... I forgive you ... Thank you ... I love you."

For the living and dying alike, these words transform legacies of pain into legacies of joy.

"The healing of a broken relationship," Dr. Byock argues, "in the last hours or even minutes before death, can reframe the history of the relationship and the biographies of everyone involved ... They present an extraordinary opportunity, one that is available to us all to use in our lives to heal any relationship, any day."

Palliative care providers have a saying: "It's always too soon until it's too late."

When Reconciliation Feels Impossible

To some, Dr. Byock's four phrases may seem too simple for deeply painful relationships brimming with damage. Yet he's not the only palliative care provider who has seen transformation unravel from fractured relationships when one party dares to be vulnerable.

Sallie Tisdale, a veteran hospice nurse, offers similar hope in her book "Advice

for Future Corpses (And Those Who Love Them)." She writes to caregivers of the dying, "Make room for the possibility of changing the course of a life even at the last moment."

Hospice physician and End-of-Life University (EOLU) founder Dr. Karen Wyatt also offers practical advice to such caregivers. In an EOLU podcast discussion with award-winning author and hospice nurse Barbara Karnes, she encourages listeners to say what needs to be said even when the one dying is no longer conscious.

Hearing is the last sense we lose in the dying process. Dr. Wyatt said she believes that you may experience peace and offer peace to a dying loved one when you whisper necessary words into their ear, whether they respond or not.

Dr. Byock acknowledges the many challenges of saying the four things, such as overcoming legitimate, deep-seated anger toward the one dying, but he writes that the four things can help

you find better options than any amount of bitterness.

He also offers advice and hope for when a loved one dies too soon or becomes lost in dementia before you reconcile with them. He said he believes in saying the four things anyway. Perhaps they can understand or hear you. Either way, it will do you a world of good.

Whatever the circumstance, imagine healing even if it seems impossible, Dr. Byock writes. Once you've imagined the possibility, say the four things early and say them often.

Sharleen Lucas, R.N., is a freelance writer with medical, spiritual, and emergency care expertise. After two decades of serving patients and families at the bedside or as a spiritual care director, she's committed to empowering readers' physical and spiritual well-being by boiling down health information with the warmth and skill of an RN next door. You can find her at RNextdoor.com

This article concludes this series.

AGE WELL

Moai: A Tradition of Friendship for a Longer, Happier Life

In Okinawa, the longest-living people in the world have learned what it means to support each other

By Emma Suttie

In our quest for health, we often focus on the essentials: what we eat, how much we exercise, and how well we sleep. These are all vital, but so too are our intangible needs for meaningful relationships and purpose.

Among some of the healthiest and longest-living people on the planet, tending to these intangible aspects is a core part of the culture and is reflected in practices such as moai. Moai is one of the reasons that the people on the Japanese island of Okinawa live so long and so well.

A moai is a group of lifelong friends who

support each other socially, financially, emotionally, and spiritually. This somewhat formalized relationship is established during childhood and is meant to endure throughout one's lifetime.

Moai meet regularly—monthly, weekly, or even daily—to chat, reminisce, share advice, and support each other through whatever may be happening in their lives. Many Japanese belong to more than one moai.

The word moai means to "meet for a common purpose."

This Japanese tradition has endured for hundreds of years and still survives (and thrives) on Okinawa. The moai concept has gained attention recently because of the Blue Zones research conducted by National Geographic explorer and author Dan Buettner. According to the research, Okinawa's moai are considered one of the reasons that it boasts the highest concentration of centenarians in the world.

Okinawans and the Secrets of Longevity

Researchers have been trying to determine what makes Okinawa and its residents so extraordinary for decades. According to a BBC article, for every 100,000 inhabitants, Okinawa has 68 centenarians—more than three times the numbers found in U.S. populations of the same size. Even by Japanese standards, Okinawans are remarkable, with a 40 percent greater chance of liv-

ing to 100 than other Japanese people.

Far from a recent trend, Okinawans have lived long lives for centuries. In the rural village of Ogimi, located in the north of Okinawa's main island, there's a small stone marker engraved in Japanese with a declaration from the village elders. Roughly translated, it reads:

"At 80, you are merely a youth; at 90, if the ancestors invite you into heaven, ask them to wait until you are 100. ... and then you might consider it."

So, what can we learn from Okinawans? Craig Willcox, a professor of public health and gerontology at Okinawa International University, says it comes down to three factors: diet, social practices, and genetics. Mr. Willcox is also a co-principal investigator for the Okinawa Centenarian Study, which has been investigating Okinawan longevity since 1975.

"About two-thirds of longevity is related to diet and way of life; the rest is genetics. Generally speaking, you need the genetic rocket booster if you want to get into the 100s, not just a good diet," Mr. Willcox said. "We haven't looked into whether or not Okinawa has a genetic advantage

over other parts of Japan, but longevity does run in families here."

Then there's the way that social support is built into Okinawan society through moai. This social mechanism brings groups of people with shared interests together, allowing them to develop strong emotional bonds that last a lifetime. Mr. Buettner said that's a crucial element to living a long life, noting that "loneliness is as bad for you as smoking."

Mr. Willcox said that belonging to multiple moai is common. "I know one man in Ogimi who is in seven," he said. "And people are loyal to their moai; I met a group of 80-year-old women on an outlying island who had been in a moai together since they were in elementary school. I'm in one, too—our common interest is slow food."

The History of Moai

Moai have a long history in Japan, originating hundreds of years ago as a way for villages to create their own financial support system. Moai were originally formed to pool the resources of an entire village for different projects or public works. If someone in the village needed money to buy land, pay medical bills, or deal with an emergency, the money

was raised locally to help members of the community.

Today, moais have evolved into more of a social support network, helping people to stay connected and involved in their communities from childhood, all the way to their 100s and beyond.

The Science of Social Connections

Scientific studies have also demonstrated the impact that social connections have on our health and well-being.

Social Relationships and Health, a landmark study published in Science in 1988, noted that research has established that social relationships impact health and that prospective studies have consistently shown an increased risk of death among those with few and even low-quality social relationships. The study also says that research on humans and animals suggests that social isolation, or the lack of social connections, is a major risk factor for mortality from a wide variety of causes. In the decades since, these findings have continually been affirmed.

A 2017 article published in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine explains that from psychological theories to recent research, there's significant evidence that social support and feel-

ing connected can help people maintain a healthy body mass index, control blood sugar, improve cancer survival, decrease cardiovascular mortality, decrease depressive symptoms, mitigate post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and improve overall mental health. The article adds that the opposite of social connection—social isolation—has an adverse effect on health and can increase depressive symptoms as well as mortality.

Final Thoughts

Research has shown that the quantity and quality of our social relationships impact our health and well-being. Those with close connections to others generally experience less stress, are happier, and live longer. Conversely, older people who don't have close friendships are more likely to develop chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and depression, and are at higher risk of stroke.

So, although eating well, limiting stress, and getting good-quality sleep are important factors for a healthy life, so too is talking to your neighbor and making time regularly to meet with friends. Of course, social ties aren't just a matter of health, they also make our time here a little more enjoyable—and spread that joy to others.

JGI/TOM GRILL/GETTY IMAGES



Moai are groups of friends formed in childhood around the shared purpose of supporting one another.



DAVID SACKS/GETTY IMAGES

SOCIAL IMPACT

The Filtered Reality: From Selfies to Surgery

Social media is fueling a dramatic rise in cosmetic surgeries among a surprisingly young cohort

By Sheramy Tsai

In a world where one can digitally erase a blemish or brighten the eyes with a click, many are seeking more permanent “edits” through the surgeon’s knife.

The Quest for the Perfect Selfie

From the grainy front-camera shots of the early 2010s to today’s HD, filter-rich portraits, the evolution of the “selfie” is evident. What began as candid snapshots have transformed into highly refined images, in large part because of technological advancements and social media’s influence.

Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook popularized high-quality, curated images. Snapchat and TikTok took it further by introducing user-friendly filters that offer instant enhancements. Users can now achieve clearer skin, prominent cheekbones, and idealized lighting conditions with a single tap.

A University of London report paints a telling picture: 90 percent of women resort to filters or edits, not just for flawless skin or teeth whitening, but also to alter facial structures and reduce perceived body weight.

“Selfies are often carefully curated and edited to select the best images that highlight their most attractive features while hiding perceived flaws,” said Dr. Tara Well, an associate professor of psychology at Barnard College and the

author of “Mirror Meditation.”

“This can lead to unrealistic beauty standards and constant comparisons with the flawless images we see online,” she told The Epoch Times.

Digital Desires: Selfies and Cosmetic Surgery

The digital era has not only transformed how we remember moments but also reshaped beauty ideals. This shift gave rise to “Snapchat dysmorphia,” as coined in a Boston University School of Medicine article. This term encapsulates the desire

The pervasiveness of these filtered images can take a toll on one’s self-esteem, and make one feel inadequate for not looking a certain way in the real world.

Dr. Susruthi Rajanala, internal medicine specialist

of many to mirror their filtered online selves in real life.

A 2019 survey by the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) underscores this trend: 72 percent of surgeons noted patients wanting procedures to enhance their selfie appeal, a notable 15 percent jump from the previous year.

The AAFPRS succinctly encapsulates this trend, commenting, “Whether you call it the ‘Kardashian Effect,’ ‘Selfie Mania,’ ‘Snapchat Dysmorphia,’ or the ‘Glow-Up’ challenge, every single tag-gable trend points to the same thing: social media’s ensuring and ever-increasing impact on the facial plastic surgery industry.”

A deep dive into global demographics paints a compelling picture. Remarkably, 51.4 percent of female university students in Saudi Arabia are enthusiastic followers of plastic surgeons online. Meanwhile, in the United States, 6.4 percent of those in higher education have already undergone cosmetic enhancements. Among them, 43 percent are considering further procedures, heavily influenced by media portrayals of beauty and the ever-persistent lure of cosmetic surgery promotions.

This trend continues beyond college doors. Dr. Rod J. Rohrich of the Dallas Plastic Surgery Institute emphasizes the pervasive influence of social media on even younger demographics.

“There’s a clear link between the proliferation of social media and the surge in teen cosmetic procedures,” he told The Epoch Times.

His research shows that in 2016 alone, procedures for those under 19 surpassed 229,551. According to Dr. Rohrich, this rise is driven by peer pressure and an emerging beauty trend known as “prejuvenation”—a preemptive strike against wrinkles. However, he’s quick to point out the lack of solid evidence backing this method.

Dr. Rohrich also raised alarms about the unchecked increase in teens seeking treatments such as Botox at spas.

“It’s distressing how easily teenagers can walk into any U.S. spa for Botox or fillers.” He emphasized the importance of turning to qualified professionals, urging teens and their parents to consult certified dermatologists or plastic surgeons who uphold ethical standards, including verifying age and securing parental consent.

The Cosmetic Industry Strikes Gold

The selfie trend has more than just teenagers and influencers hooked. It’s sent the cosmetic industry soaring to unprecedented heights. With young adults increasingly opting for treatments to enhance their online personas, cosmetic clinics are cashing in.



Procedures, including preemptive botox injections, are rising among those under 19.

The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS) recorded a 19.3 percent increase in plastic surgeries in 2021, tallying up to 12.8 million surgical and 17.5 million non-surgical procedures. Over four years, aesthetic surgeries have seen 33.3 percent growth, with non-surgical procedures charting a formidable 54.4 percent rise.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons indicates a marked uptick in cosmetic interventions among those aged 18 to 30, including Botox, dermal fillers, and laser resurfacing. Astonishingly, out of the 1.9 million Botox enthusiasts under 35, 106,000 were younger than 18.

Cleverly capitalizing on this trend, cosmetic clinics now court social media influencers with discounted or free treatments, hoping to gain online traction. This collaborative strategy underscores a cultural shift: Procedures once earmarked for the elite are now increasingly mainstream for younger audiences.

However, this cozy relationship between influencers and clinics is drawing ethical scrutiny. As hashtags such as “plasticsurgery” and “lipfiller” amass billions of views on TikTok, discerning genuine content from veiled advertising grows challenging.

Dubbed “selfie surgeries,” niche treatments cater to this tech-savvy generation’s appetite for specific looks, such as the sought-after “Kylie Jenner pout.” The resulting financial windfall for the industry is staggering. Cosmetic services span a broad price range, from \$300 to \$10,000 and even more. With ISAPS noting a 5 percent yearly rise in surgical treatments, the U.S. is a significant market driver.

Projected growth is robust: From \$67.3 billion in 2021, the global cosmetic surgery market is poised to triple by 2031 to \$201 billion.

Hidden Dangers of Cosmetic Pursuits

Amid the dazzling appeal of selfie culture lie the often-overlooked perils of cosmetic surgery. The immediate post-operative risks are seldom spotlighted, from infections and scarring to blood clots and nerve damage. Anesthesia, for more significant surgeries, adds another layer of unpredictability.

Research spanning 20 years and 26,032 cases has confirmed the relative safety of outpatient plastic surgeries when conducted by board-certified surgeons in accredited facilities. Yet, even then, 1

in 100 patients confront complications.

But even the seemingly benign procedures, such as the increasingly popular Botox among the youth, have their pitfalls. A detailed study on cosmetic Botulinum Toxin A injections for the upper face found that 16 percent of users faced complications, ranging from headaches to neuromuscular symptoms. Although many issues proved minor, the research emphasized the necessity for qualified professionals and highlighted the lack of uniformity in reporting these complications.

Adding depth to this narrative is a growing inclination among the young to seek unlicensed venues or overseas clinics, lured by the appeal of savings. States such as Florida, Texas, and California became focal points in 2013 for these hazardous shortcuts. The tragic outcomes, from hospitalizations to deaths, suggest a broader, largely unreported crisis.

Yet the implications extend beyond the physical. The rise in body dysmorphic disorder (BDD)—a condition characterized by a fixation on perceived appearance flaws—is concerning. Ironically, surgeries, seen as solutions, might intensify this psychological turmoil.

An exhaustive study from India, known for its high number of selfie-related accidents, delves into this issue. Surveying 300 individuals across major cities, the research attributes increased social anxieties and a growing propensity for cosmetic surgeries to selfie culture, with women predominantly affected.

The study refers to the “deleterious effects of uploading selfies on human well-being.” The authors warn of an “obsessively looks-oriented culture” engulfing youth, pointing to digital filters and a surge in real-world cosmetic procedures.

“The prevalent obsessively looks-ori-



▲ Experts say the increase in teen plastic surgery is linked to social media use.

ented culture is engulfing our youth’s innocence and warrants immediate attention,” the authors conclude.

Dr. Well further highlights the mental health aspect.

“People with body dysmorphic disorder may engage in repeated cosmetic procedures in an attempt to fix perceived flaws, even if those flaws are not visible to others.”

“The pervasiveness of these filtered images can take a toll on one’s self-esteem, make one feel inadequate for not looking a certain way in the real world, and may even act as a trigger and lead to BDD,” Dr. Susruthi Rajanala stated.

Selfies are often carefully curated and edited to select the best images that highlight their most attractive features while hiding perceived flaws.

Dr. Tara Well, associate professor of psychology, Barnard College

Future of Beauty in a Filtered Age

In a world where the digital world can skew perceptions, the rise of cosmetic enhancements further blurs the lines of authenticity. But there’s a growing call to honor the innate beauty that each person possesses.

Leading this change is the #NoFilter campaign. This effort inspires authenticity by urging users, predominantly women, to showcase themselves without makeup or digital tweaks. The campaign is based on the idea that true beauty resides in our natural imperfections, an allure that no digital enhancement can truly capture.

Unilever’s “Campaign for Real Beauty” for its Dove brand amplifies this message. Initiated in 2004, it highlighted beauty’s vast tapestry by spotlighting women from varied backgrounds. A standout from their campaign was the “Evolution” video, which unveiled the dramatic alterations media can make, thereby spotlighting the skewed standards presented to the public.

More recently, Dove released the “Reverse Selfie” video. Dove’s efforts weren’t restricted to just campaigns; they forged a vibrant community on social media, endorsing the essence of genuine beauty.

Dove is furthering its mission with the Self-Esteem project. Teaming up with experts in psychology, health, and body image, the initiative aims to reimagine beauty as a source of confidence, not anxiety. The company’s website reveals a significant reach: more than 82 million young people benefiting from self-esteem education, while aiming to empower a quarter of a billion by 2030.

“Encouraging self-acceptance and promoting realistic beauty standards can help mitigate the negative impact of selfie culture on body image and mental health,” Dr. Well said.

WISE HABITS

How to Stick to Long-Term Changes

When progress takes time, it helps to find ways to stay motivated

By Leo Babauta

If you’re trying to lose weight or gain muscle, you can work really hard at it for a week and see no change. The same goes for learning music or a language, or creating meaningful change in the world.

Seeing progress quickly can be very encouraging, although it’s hard to stick to long-term changes when you don’t get immediate results. So how do we find encouragement without obvious progress?

Over the years, I have been able to stick to some big long-term changes: losing weight, working out to gain strength, training for marathons, creating a blog audience, and much more. I still don’t find this stuff easy!

Let’s look at some of the things I’ve found helpful in sticking to long-term changes when I’m not getting immediate results.

The Mindset

It’s important to recognize when we’re



▲ Sometimes we need a little help with long-term goals that require slow, steady progress.

- I’m inspired by what I want to create.
- I’m committed to this for the long term because I care about what I’m creating.

- I love the activity that I’m doing to lead to my long-term goal.

- Getting stopped is a part of this growth process, and I simply need to start again.

I should be clear that mindset takes practice. We don’t just decide to come from a new mindset, and it happens instantly. We will get stuck in the old mindset, and the practice is to recognize it and practice the new one.

Ways to Encourage Yourself

If the thing you’re trying to achieve (improved health, learning a language, changing people’s hearts and minds) isn’t going to happen this week, then how do you find encouragement?

We need to look for more immediate ways to find rewards, to sustain our long-term encouragement.

Here are some things I’ve found helpful:

Find the Fun

Look for things in the activity to enjoy as you’re doing it. If you’re training for a marathon, can you enjoy the run as you’re running rather than focusing on wanting to be able to run longer (which takes time)?

Track Your Wins

Give yourself the equivalent of a gold star when you’re done—by checking it off a list, putting a sticker on a calendar, logging it on a meditation or workout app, etc. It feels good to be able to give yourself that star!

Create Accountability

Be in an accountability group. This allows you to report when you’ve done something, and it feels rewarding. I’m currently doing a fitness challenge with my wife and kids, and it’s fun to report on what I did each day.

Acknowledge Your Efforts

Find encouraging things to tell yourself. We rarely acknowledge ourselves and usually find things to tell ourselves that are discouraging or critical. Switch that up! What could you tell yourself that would be loving and encouraging? “You’ve got this.” “I’m proud of how hard you’re working.” “You are courageous!” It might feel silly at first, but that’s because we’re not used to it—we’re used to berating ourselves. Be encouraging for a change!

Focus on the Why

Remind yourself daily of the possibility you’re creating. What’s the reason you’re doing this? Why is it important to you? What will be amazing about it once you’re done? This is the possibility you’re creating with this effort—remind your-

We may go to the gym alone but the environment gives us a sense of community support.



LJURPCO SMOKOVSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK

self of why you care about this every day.

Turn It Into a Game

When you’re running your long run for marathon training, can you set little targets for yourself and think of each target as an achievement during the run? Can you play music and let yourself feel silly and joyful as you run? When I was running on Guam, I would tell myself to pick up the pace until the next telephone pole, then run easy until the one after that, then run like a little kid for the one after that, etc.

Each time I lift the weight, it’s connected to the greater strength I’m creating for myself, and it feels powerful.

Tune Into Your Gains

Feel how the activity is building the possibility you’re creating—as you’re doing the activity. For example, if I’m lifting weights, I can let myself feel the strength I’m building with every rep. Each time I lift the weight, it’s connected to the greater strength I’m creating for myself, and it feels powerful.

Find Supporters

Get people to be your cheerleaders. Who’s got your back? Who’s cheering you on when things get hard? When I ran my first marathon, I had friends who ran long training runs with me, a sister who would run with me at 5 a.m. in the dark, and a wife and kids who told me they were proud of me and who made signs to cheer me on during my race. Some of those running friends ran the marathon with me and didn’t let me quit when I wanted to give up. We need people—we can’t do this alone.

Mark Any Milestones

Celebrate your small victories. We are so focused on the long-term outcome that we want it to be a reality this minute. But what about the smaller victories along the way? If you’re writing a book, finishing a chapter is a great victory! Find a way to celebrate along the way, instead of just at the end.

I hope these help. You don’t have to do all of them—I’d suggest playing with the ones that feel like they’ll encourage you. If those don’t work, try some of the others.

What long-term effort have you been struggling to stick to? Learn from past failures, let them go, and give it another shot—but with more encouragement.

Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with more than 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net

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SCAN TO WATCH

FRONTLINE HEALTH



Chinese Medicine: How to Find a Good Doctor

In this episode, Dr. Jingduan Yang explains to us the types of traditional Chinese medicine doctors found in the United States, what their limitations are, and what are the signs of a good practitioner.



SCAN TO WATCH

PERFORMANCE



J.S. Bach: Concert in A Minor BWV 1041

The Madeira Mandolin Orchestra plays Concert in A minor, BWV 1041, by J.S. Bach. (Soloist: Rodrigo Freitas) Enjoy this beautiful piece of uplifting music by Bach played on mandolin and guitar.



SCAN TO WATCH

VITAL SIGNS



New Methods for Treating Alzheimer's Disease

Leading neurologist Dr. Sheldon Jordan is pioneering the treatment of Alzheimer's using ultrasound technology, which is currently approved worldwide. Functional MRI, connecting pathways between different parts of the brain, stands to open up the treatment possibilities even further.



SCAN TO WATCH

EAT BETTER



How to Cure Anxiety With Food and Natural Alternatives

On this episode of Eat Better, we explore different ways of curing anxiety. We take a look at different foods that can help, plus some other natural alternatives that are backed by science.



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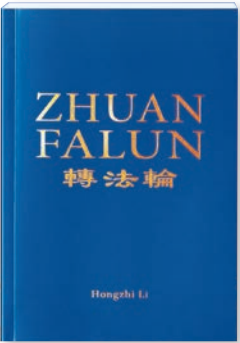
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Arthur Waldron
LAUDER PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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These heavily promoted and widely available drinks are causing a wide range of health issues.

Sweetened Drinks Strongly Linked to Liver Diseases

New research ties sweetened drinks to liver cancer, cirrhosis, and other chronic liver diseases

By Flora Zhao

Do you find yourself drinking a sweetened beverage every day? Be cautious, as this habit could increase the risk of chronic liver disease and even liver cancer.

It's widely known that consuming sweetened drinks can contribute to obesity and insulin resistance, but a recent prospective cohort study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) has now linked sweetened drinks to liver disease.

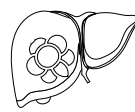
The study shows that individuals who regularly consume sweetened drinks face an astonishing 85 percent higher likelihood of developing liver cancer and a 68 percent higher risk of mortality from chronic liver disease than those who consume fewer sweetened drinks.

Elevated Risks of Liver Cancer, Liver Disease

This study was led by scientists from Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital, and it drew data from a comprehensive prospective clinical database in the United States: the Women's Health Initiative. The database has been gathering information from a cohort of more than 160,000 postmenopausal women aged 50 to 79. The information collection concluded in 2020 after a follow-up period of approximately 21 years.

“Epidemiological studies on dietary factors and liver cancer and chronic liver disease mortality are limited,” the researchers emphasized in the report. “To our knowledge, this is the first study to report an association between sugar-sweetened beverage intake and chronic liver disease mortality.”

Research has demonstrated a link between sweetened drink consumption and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease onset.



Sweetened drinks can cause liver fat buildup due to their high fructose content.

ABHISHEK B L/SHUTTERSTOCK

Participants completed the survey questionnaire detailing their consumption of sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened drinks, excluding fruit juices. These individuals were divided into three groups:

- Women who consumed three servings or less per month.
- Women who drank one to six servings per week.
- Women who drank one or more servings per day (with one serving equivalent to 12 ounces or 355 milliliters, roughly the size of a standard beverage can).

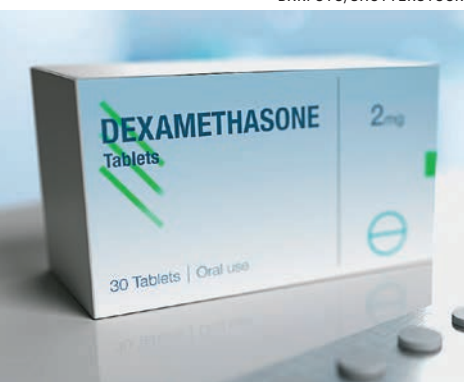
The findings revealed that women who consumed one or more servings of sweetened drinks daily had an 85

Continued on Page 14

Diet-Drug Combo Starves Tumors

A new study found a ketogenic diet paired with hormone therapy had powerful anti-cancer effects

Dexamethasone combined with a ketogenic diet resulted in reduced cancer wasting in patients.



By Flora Zhao

A ketogenic diet may have potentially serious side effects when used for cancer treatment, although incorporating a specific medication may effectively reverse those side effects, according to a recent study.

Potential Side Effects of the Ketogenic Diet for Cancer Treatment

The principle behind using the ketogenic diet for cancer treatment is that it switches the body's energy source to ketones from glucose. This metabolic shift aims to deprive cancer cells of their fuel, as they can't utilize ketones and would have limited access to glucose. However, the actual effects and safety of the ketogenic diet for cancer treatment are still being studied.

A study published in Cell Metabolism in June found that improper implemen-

tation of the ketogenic diet during cancer treatment could lead to an earlier onset of cachexia, a wasting syndrome associated with cancer.

The researchers divided mice with cancer into two groups and fed them either a ketogenic diet (high in fat, moderate in protein, and low in carbohydrates) or a standard diet.

A recent study indicates that the ketogenic diet may have potential side effects when used for cancer treatment.

The results showed that the ketogenic diet slowed tumor growth compared to a standard diet, demonstrating its anti-cancer effects. In addition to the commonly known mechanism of cancer cell

starvation, the researchers provided another explanation: The consumption of fats in the ketogenic diet results in their oxidation, producing lipid peroxides. The accumulation of this substance results in a type of programmed cell death, known as ferroptosis, in cancer cells dependent on iron.

However, the ketogenic diet also has exhibited some severe side effects. Compared to a standard diet, the ketogenic diet accelerated the onset of cancer cachexia in these mice. The animals experienced a significant reduction in body weight (more than 15 percent) and systemic wasting, and had a shorter lifespan than the cancer-afflicted mice on a standard diet. The median overall survival rate of mice on the ketogenic diet was only 10 days, while it was 14 days for the mice on a standard diet.

Miriam Ferrer, a postdoctoral researcher

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Sweetened Drinks Strongly Linked to Liver Diseases

Continued from Page 13

percent higher risk of developing liver cancer than those who drank three servings or less per month. Their mortality rate due to chronic liver disease was 68 percent higher.

In the study, “chronic liver disease” refers to conditions such as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, liver fibrosis, alcoholic liver disease, and chronic hepatitis. During the calculation, potential factors that could influence liver disease, including age, ethnicity, education level, smoking and alcohol consumption habits, and body mass index, were taken into account.

Known risk factors for liver cancer include hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections, metabolic disorders, excessive alcohol consumption, and foods contaminated with aflatoxins, such as peanuts and corn.

“However, approximately 40 percent of patients with liver cancer do not have these risk factors. ... Therefore, it is important to identify dietary risk factors for liver cancer and chronic liver disease mortality,” the researchers said in the report.

The Impact of Sweetened Drinks on the Liver

Other studies have also corroborated the damaging effects of sweetened drinks on the liver.

A prospective European cohort study revealed that individuals who consume more than six servings of soft drinks per week face a notably higher risk of hepatocellular carcinoma (the most common form of liver cancer) by 83 percent compared to those who consume fewer than one serving. The risk increases by 6 percent for each additional serving per week. Another study conducted in the United States indicated that drinking sugar-sweetened soda is associated with an 18 percent increase in the risk of liver cancer.

Research has also demonstrated a link between sweetened drink consumption and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease onset. A systematic review and meta-analysis published in the European Journal

of Nutrition revealed that individuals who consumed the highest amounts of sugar-sweetened drinks had 40 percent increased odds of developing nonalcoholic fatty liver disease compared to those who consumed the least. Another study in 2022 proposed that individuals who frequently consume sugar-sweetened drinks have 2.53 times increased odds of developing nonalcoholic fatty liver disease compared to those who rarely drink such beverages.

In the recent JAMA study mentioned earlier, the authors concluded that the main factors contributing to the threat to liver health from sweetened drinks are the following:

- Sweetened drinks may contribute to obesity and spikes in blood sugar, leading to insulin resistance—all of which are risk factors for liver cancer and liver disease.
- Sweetened drinks contain significant amounts of fructose, which can lead to the buildup of liver fat and, in turn, potentially trigger the development of liver cancer.
- Consuming sweetened drinks can lead to abnormal blood lipid levels and have an adverse impact on gut microbiota, which, in turn, affects liver health.
- Metabolites produced after consumption (such as taurine and phenylalanine) are linked to liver cell carcinoma.

Diet-Drug Combo Starves Tumors

Continued from Page 13

at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, said in a statement that the “first and most striking finding” of the study was that mice fed a ketogenic diet exhibited slower tumor growth and smaller tumors but also experienced an earlier onset of cachexia.

Additionally, while the mice with cancer that were on a ketogenic diet showed a significant increase in ketones in their bodies as compared with those on a standard diet, the magnitude of the increase was much lower as compared with

healthy mice following the same diet. This indicates that the tumor inhibited the ketogenic effect, hindering the body’s utilization of ketones.

“Given that our research focuses on cachexia, we wondered whether the potential anti-tumor effects of a ketogenic diet might be overshadowed by the strain it puts on the body,” the study’s lead author Dr. Tobias Janowitz, an assistant professor at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and a member of the Northwell Health Cancer Institute, said in the statement.



▲ The ketogenic diet switches the body’s energy source to ketones, depriving cancer cells of their fuel source, glucose.

- Sweetened drinks contain various chemicals (such as caramel color and additives) that may harm the body.

Researchers Urge Caution

While establishing a clear link between sugar-sweetened drinks and liver disease, the results of this study indicate that the consumption of artificially sweetened drinks isn’t significantly associated with liver cancer or chronic liver disease mortality.

“This finding is not that surprising,” the two lead authors of the study, Longgang Zhao, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Channing Division of Network Medi-

We should be promoting a diet lower in sugar, rather than the previous confused nutritional messaging of just reducing calories and reducing fat.

Dr. Jason Fung, nephrologist



cine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School, and Xuehong Zhang, associate professor at Harvard Medical School and associate epidemiologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, said during an interview with The Epoch Times. They explained this is because “the consumption level of artificially sweetened beverages is low in this population (postmenopausal women), and the sample size of liver cancer and death due to chronic liver diseases is relatively small.”

However, they emphasized that “these results should be interpreted with caution”—in other words, the results don’t mean artificially sweetened drinks are safer than sugar-sweetened drinks.

“Additionally, other studies also indicate that artificially sweetened beverages have been associated with a higher risk of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, all-cause mortality, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease incidence,” the authors said.

However, he also noted that “it’s an observational study, which is less robust than a controlled trial.” The authors admitted that this research shouldn’t be hastily assumed to imply causation.

Due to the study questionnaire’s design, the differentiation of types of sweetened drinks is limited, and it isn’t possible to specifically categorize artificial sweeteners.

However, Mr. Zhang and Mr. Zhao said, “If our study findings are confirmed, reducing the consumption of sweetened beverages could become a public health strategy to alleviate the burden of liver disease.”

Dr. Fung said, “We should be promoting a diet lower in sugar, rather than the previous confused nutritional messaging of just reducing calories and reducing fat.”

Mr. Zhang and Mr. Zhao explained, “Given that the study focused on postmenopausal women, studies involving men and younger women are needed to examine the associations more comprehensively. Furthermore, more research is needed to elucidate the potential mechanisms (linking sweetened-drink consumption to liver disease and liver cancer) by integrating genetics, animal/experimental studies, and -omics [genomics, metabolomics, metagenomics, and so forth] data.”

regulating metabolism during times of stress and helps modulate the effects of ketones.

A substance called NADPH is required for the production of corticosterone. However, in a ketogenic diet, NADPH is heavily used by the body to detoxify lipid peroxides, resulting in a deficiency of this building block.

“The depletion of the building blocks is a side effect of the biochemical processing of the lipids that are part of the ketogenic diet,” Dr. Janowitz said.

The weight of the mice pre-experience cachexia, with up to 80 percent of cases occurring in the advanced stages of the disease. Compared to late-stage cancer patients without cachexia, those with it may experience a 30 percent reduction in survival rate.

Regrettably, there are currently no effective methods to fully reverse cachexia.

Understanding Cancer Cachexia: The Wasting Syndrome Associated With Cancer

People’s fear of cancer stems not only from the terror of the tumor itself, but also from the apprehension of enduring the distressing effects of cancer cachexia.

The term “cachexia” originates from the Greek words “kakos” and “hexis,” which mean “bad condition.”

Cancer cachexia—also called wasting syndrome—is a complex metabolic syndrome characterized by loss of skeletal muscle and, in some cases, wasting of adipose tissue. This condition can’t be reversed by simply increasing calorie and protein intake. Unfortunately, the exact mechanisms underlying cancer cachexia aren’t yet fully understood.

“The relationship of cancer leading to cachexia can be thought of as a continued

process, like a wound that does not heal,” Dr. Janowitz told The Epoch Times in an interview.

There are multiple factors associated with cancer cachexia. For example, cancer patients may experience appetite loss because of dysgeusia (a taste disorder) and nausea. Tumors and other cells can also release specific substances that induce anorexia. Furthermore, hormonal changes can contribute to a decline in anabolic

processes and an increase in catabolic metabolism, ultimately resulting in an imbalance between energy intake and expenditure.

Cancer cachexia can cause various physical and psychological discomforts, including dry mouth, vomiting, diarrhea, inflammation, pain, energy loss, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and anxiety. It can also impact cancer treatment, resulting in reduced anti-tumor efficacy, increased chemotherapy toxicity, and a higher risk of complications from cancer surgery.

Most cancer patients experience cachexia, with up to 80 percent of cases occurring in the advanced stages of the disease. Compared to late-stage cancer patients without cachexia, those with it may experience a 30 percent reduction in survival rate.

Regrettably, there are currently no effective methods to fully reverse cachexia.

Improved Survival With Corticosteroid Medications

However, researchers have identified a potential solution to sustain the ke-

togenic diet’s anti-cancer effects while preventing the onset of cachexia.

“Healthy mice also lose weight on keto, but their metabolism adapts, and they plateau. Mice with cancer can’t adapt,” Dr. Janowitz said.

This is because of their inability to produce sufficient amounts of corticosterone, a hormone similar to cortisol in humans. Corticosterone is a steroid hormone that plays a role in

regulating metabolism during times of stress and helps modulate the effects of ketones.

A substance called NADPH is required for the production of corticosterone. However, in a ketogenic diet, NADPH is heavily used by the body to detoxify lipid peroxides, resulting in a deficiency of this building block.

“The depletion of the building blocks is a side effect of the biochemical processing of the lipids that are part of the ketogenic diet,” Dr. Janowitz said.

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Regrettably, there are currently no effective methods to fully reverse cachexia.

with cancer continued to decline, as they lacked the necessary hormone to regulate metabolism.

Therefore, researchers used a medication called dexamethasone in conjunction with the ketogenic diet, resulting in positive outcomes. The overall survival of the mice with cancer increased from 10 days to 33 days, more than tripling the initial duration.

Dexamethasone administration also extended the survival of the mice with cancer that were on a standard diet,

increasing it from 14 days to 19 days. However, their magnitude of improvement was significantly lower than that observed in the mice with cancer that received both the ketogenic diet and dexamethasone.

“But with the steroid, [the mice with cancer] did much better. They lived longer than with any other treatment we tried,” Ms. Ferrer said.

Dexamethasone is a type of corticosteroid commonly used as a supportive treatment for cancer patients undergoing standard therapy. By administering dexamethasone, the body receives supplemental hormones essential for metabolic adaptation.

Meanwhile, the ketogenic diet continued to induce ferroptosis in cancer cells, significantly improving the survival of the mice with cancer.

Additionally, dexamethasone didn’t impact the tumor size and weight of the mice with cancer on the ketogenic diet. In contrast, the mice with cancer on a standard diet combined with dexamethasone experienced a twofold increase in tumor growth at the end of their lifespan.

Future Challenges and Prospects

Researchers are continuing to conduct more preclinical studies. However, Dr. Janowitz believes that it’s “too early to say” when human clinical trials can start.

He said that the upcoming research will face a major question: Why do patients with cachexia experience loss of appetite following weight loss?

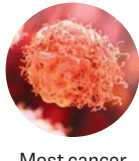
“Our study emphasizes the importance of considering the overall effects of an intervention on the entire body rather than solely focusing on tumor growth,” Dr. Janowitz said.



Sweetened beverages often contain a variety of harmful chemicals, including artificial colors and other additives.

Another study conducted in the United States indicated that drinking sugar-sweetened soda is associated with an

18 PERCENT increase in the risk of liver cancer.



Most cancer patients experience cachexia, with up to

80 PERCENT

of cases occurring in the advanced stages of the disease.





Both integrative and functional medicine offer personalized care using a variety of approaches.

HEALTH CARE

The Difference Between Integrative and Functional Medicine

These 2 holistic approaches are garnering increasing interest from patients disappointed by the limitations of conventional medicine

By Emma Suttie

Traditional forms of medicine were, by nature, holistic. But in the past century, conventional medicine has mainly focused on the physical aspects of illness, breaking the body up into parts to be dealt with in isolation by specialists who concentrate on disease and dysfunction. Their focus on disease—rather than health—has informed how medicine is practiced and patients are treated.

Integrative and functional medicine bring the focus back to patients and their health and healing. The surge in popularity of these modalities suggests that patients are drawn to this new (or very old) approach.

So what are integrative medicine and functional medicine? And how are they different?

What Is Integrative Medicine?

Treating the Whole Person

Integrative medicine uses an evidence-based approach to treat the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. A patient’s physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs are addressed as each is considered integral to overall health and well-being.

Integrative medicine uses a combination of approaches from different disciplines to achieve healing that is specific to each patient.

Dr. Andrew Weil is a pioneer in integrative medicine and founded the

Integrative medicine is the intelligent combination of conventional and alternative medicine.

Dr. Andrew Weil, founder, Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine

Integrative practitioners are typically more likely to recommend a diverse range of herbal remedies.



Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona in 1994. He and others have been educating practitioners from all over the world about the benefits of integrative medicine for nearly two decades.

In an interview on his YouTube channel, Dr. Weil defines integrative medicine this way:

“Integrative medicine is the intelligent combination of conventional and alternative medicine.”

“In essence, [it] is trying to restore the focus of medicine on health and healing away from disease/symptom management.

“It emphasizes whole-person medicine, meaning that we are more than just physical bodies—we are minds, spirits, and community members.

“It looks at all aspects of lifestyle—it emphasizes the importance of the practitioner-patient relationship to the healing practice. And then it is willing to look at all methods—from whatever tradition they come from that may be of value in treating disease—that is the alternative piece.”

A Combination of Disciplines and Therapies

Integrative medicine uses lifestyle changes and approaches from a variety of healing traditions to treat each aspect of the patient. The type of therapy

chosen is based on its strengths and effectiveness for each patient’s specific health needs.

Patient-Practitioner Relationship

A vital aspect of integrative medicine is that it places particular importance on the relationships between the patients and their health care practitioners, as they are seen as equal partners in the healing process. In these patient-practitioner relationships, the patient’s engagement is crucial, as they and the practitioner work together to achieve a unified goal—healing, maintenance, or prevention.

Coordinated Care

The aim of integrative medicine is for the patient to receive well-coordinated care, with all practitioners working together toward the same goal. This organized approach ensures that each practitioner knows what other treatments the patient is receiving, recognizes their benefits, and can build on them to aid the healing process. Working together and with open communication ensures that the patient gets the best care possible and that every practitioner treating him or her is aware and supportive of the other treatments.

A variety of health care practitioners can be involved in an integrative medicine approach, including physicians, physical therapists, acupuncturists, chiropractors, nutritionists, Chinese herbalists, psychiatrists, yoga instructors, massage therapists, and holistic psychotherapists.

Integrative medicine is also known by other names, including alternative medicine, complementary medicine, and holistic medicine, but more and more people have shifted to using the term “integrative medicine” today. Since the practice can include general practitioners, including medical specialists, it can be confusing to simply call it “alternative.”

Because of its openness to a variety of treatment types and focus on patient-centered care, integrative medicine has been steadily growing in popularity, especially in the past 20 years.

If you would like to find an integrative practitioner near you, Dr. Weil’s website has a database that is searchable by location.

What Is Functional Medicine?

The main objective of functional medicine is to identify and treat the root cause of illness.

Functional medicine practitioners are more focused on dietary and lifestyle interventions to promote health and heal-

ing than medications or surgery. They also consider factors such as genetics and hormonal changes as potential causes and treatments for diseases.

Like integrative medicine practitioners, functional medicine practitioners take a holistic approach to their patients—treating all aspects—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—as each affects health and well-being. Each patient receives individualized treatment for his or her unique set of circumstances.

Treatments are aimed at lifestyle habits, natural supplements, and complementary therapies.

Functional medicine works in tandem with conventional medicine, and its strength is in treating chronic, complex, or multilayered conditions that conventional medicine hasn’t been able to diagnose or treat effectively.

“Functional medicine is a systems biology-based approach that focuses on identifying and addressing the root cause of disease. Each symptom or differential diagnosis may be one of many contributing to an individual’s illness,” The Institute of Functional Medicine’s website reads.

In a short video, Dr. Mark Hyman, board president of clinical affairs at The Institute of Functional Medicine, describes the functional medicine approach as one that looks at the cause behind the diagnosis, joking that depression isn’t a Prozac deficiency but could be caused by any number of factors, from certain medications to various nutrient deficiencies. Any condition can have many different causes, he said.

Functional medicine is interested not just in treating disease, but in prevention and finding ways to optimize health for patients.

Specific Lab Testing

An initial appointment with a functional medicine doctor usually involves taking a detailed medical history including many questions about the state of your health and your life overall. The doctor will also request specific lab testing to see how well your body is functioning. This in-depth lab testing is one of the things that makes functional medicine different. Lab testing and a more thorough intake process are what help functional doctors get to the root of any health issue.

According to RUPA Health, some of the common lab tests done by functional medicine doctors are:

- Comprehensive stool tests (regarding digestion, absorption, and the gut microbiome and for worms, parasites, and bacteria)
- Saliva and urine tests (to understand hormone and metabolite levels)
- Breath tests (for hydrogen or methane to rule out small intestinal bacterial overgrowth)
- Blood tests (to see what’s happening at the cellular level)

The Institute of Functional Medicine has a “find a practitioner” tool on its website that can help you find a functional medicine practitioner near you.

How Are These Modalities Similar?

Integrative and functional medicine share many fundamental ideas. Both systems are also concerned with finding root causes rather than treating symptoms, which makes them better equipped to handle complex conditions than other kinds of medicine.

Because of their holistic approach and interest in root causes, both integrative and functional medicine offer individualized treatments, which are often more effective.

For example, if someone goes to a conventional Western doctor with a diagnosis of depression, the treatment will likely be medications such as antidepressants. But an integrative or functional medicine doctor will be more interested in the cause of the depression. This means that patients will be treated for the unique set of circumstances that led to their depression instead of receiving the same treatment as everyone who is depressed.

What these two systems also have in common is their emphasis on lifestyle, nutrition, and behavioral changes over medications and procedures, making them a more natural approach for those wishing to avoid more drastic interventions and potential side effects.

Both also emphasize the relationship between practitioner and patient. Because integrative and functional medicine doctors investigate much further to learn about patients and the state of their health, trust between patient and practitioner is improved. And patient engagement and participation is vital for many of the treatments these doctors may recommend, such as taking up yoga, changing one’s diet, or keeping a journal.

Finding practitioners that you like and can trust is vital, as you and the practitioner are on the healing journey together with the same goal—your optimal health and well-being.

What Are the Differences?

The main way that integrative and functional medicine differ is in their approach.

Integrative medicine focuses more on the needs of each aspect (mind, body, and spirit) to heal the unified whole using a variety of disciplines and treatments.

Functional medicine focuses more on the complex biological causes of a condition and uses in-depth blood work and specialty lab testing to get to the root of a problem, and practitioners act as detectives to get to the bottom of complex health issues.

Renewed Interest

Sixty percent of American adults now have a chronic disease, and 40 percent have two or more. Conventional medicine undoubtedly saves lives, and advances in medicine are responsible for improvements in many areas, but these statistics are a sobering reminder that many people are suffering.

Because of the way the health care system is structured, many conventional Western doctors are simply burnt out from seeing so many patients—patients they don’t have the time to treat effectively. Also, most conventional doctors receive little education when it comes to nutrition and other lifestyle interventions that might help improve their patients’ health and well-being.

Integrative and functional medicine offer a full-spectrum approach that empowers patients, focuses on root causes, and promotes health using changes in lifestyle and treatments from a variety of disciplines.

The surge of interest in integrative and functional medicine reveals a promising trend and offers hope that the future of medicine will be more focused on the health of the patient rather than the management of diseases.



Both integrative and functional medicine practitioners prefer interventions that promote health and healing without medications or surgery.

Study Casts Doubt on Most Cancer Screenings

With one exception, risks of cancer screening typically negate the benefits, study finds

By Mary Gillis

Cancer screenings have been viewed as a life-saving early detection and prevention strategy against the disease.

However, findings published in a new meta-analysis examining more than 2.1 million people suggest that early testing may not always deliver increases in life expectancy, leading scientists to question the value of these screenings.

Sigmoidoscopy Leads in Life Expectancy

After comparing six tests commonly used to detect breast, lung, prostate, and colon cancer, only sigmoidoscopy—a medical procedure used to look for abnormalities inside the colon—showed a significant impact on life gains of 110 days.

The study, published on Aug. 28 in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Internal Medicine, pooled results from 18 randomized clinical trials and included more than nine years of follow-up data.

There was no significant difference following mammographies, colonoscopies, fecal blood occult testing, computed tomography (CT scans), and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing compared to patients who had none of these screenings.

“While fecal testing and mammography screening did not prolong life ... an extension of 37 days was noted for prostate cancer screening with prostate-specific antigen testing and 107 days with lung cancer screening using computed tomography, but estimates are uncertain,” the study authors wrote.

Risks Versus Benefits

Some individuals do live longer as a result of screenings. The earlier the detection, the better the outcome regarding survival and successful treatments following diagnosis without harm or complications, the study authors wrote.

At the same time, other individuals aren’t as fortunate, with some living for a shorter time because of the dangers associated with screenings. A colonoscopy can tear the colon, and invasive prostatectomies can induce heart attacks, according to the authors.

While these results may suggest that claims that cancer screenings save lives are unsubstantiated, the authors don’t advocate against them in the paper. Tests in which the benefits outweigh the risks may be worth it. At the same time, patients must know that their doctors will disclose potential harms without bias. This requires that medical professionals offer full transparency about tackling the disease and be willing to consider alternatives.

A 2022 study that reviewed 33 cancer screening guidelines found that several fell short of capturing the potential harms of cancer screening. The authors’ conclusions echoed those of the meta-analysis, suggesting that cancer screenings should be recommended only when the benefits outweigh the risks.

The authors also pointed out that they aren’t advocating against screenings but instead are trying to raise awareness so that patients and practitioners can have well-informed discussions.

“If there’s overwhelming evidence of a net benefit of a screening test, we don’t want to scare somebody off [from getting screened],” study author Paul Doria-Rose, chief of the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Healthcare Assessment Research Branch, said in a statement. “But by the same token, if there’s a risk that [a serious harm] could happen if you have a screening test or a follow-up diagnostic test, then it’s a physician’s obligation to inform patients about what the risks of those procedures are.”

Risks of Screenings

The NCI lists several possible harms associated with screenings, which include:

- Bruising, discomfort, or colon perforation when undergoing colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy.
- Radiation exposure that can damage healthy cells.
- False-negative results, which could lead people to skip follow-up appointments despite ongoing symptoms.
- False positives resulting in anxiety and additional unnecessary testing.
- Psychological harm, such as excessive stress about preparing for the screening, waiting for results, and worrying about follow-up tests.
- Overdiagnosis of small, slow-growing cancers that would never cause any symptoms.

Benefits of Screenings

In a 2020 study published in Radiology Imaging Cancer that involved more than two decades of evidence, researchers concluded that CT scan screenings can prevent a substantial number of lung cancer-related deaths with low clinical risk.

Findings published in Cancer in 2019 show that mammograms saved between 27,083 and 45,726 lives from breast cancer in 2018.

A 2015 study published in Digestive Diseases and Sciences claimed that randomized controlled trials of sigmoidoscopy have reduced colon cancer deaths, with some observational studies

of screenings suggesting a more than 50 percent reduction in mortality.

PSA tests are simple, widely available blood tests that may help patients detect prostate cancer early. As with most cancers, prostate cancer is more likely to be cured if it’s diagnosed in the early stages. However, different from the approach to many other cancers, active monitoring is often suggested before active treatment for prostate cancer, especially when the cancer is localized.

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Mary Elizabeth Gillis is a health reporter and cardiopulmonary specialist with over a decade of experience. After graduating with her doctorate in applied physiology, she earned a master of science degree in journalism from Columbia University.

Cancer Statistics

The American Cancer Society estimates that roughly 2 million people will be diagnosed with cancer in the United States in 2023. Approximately 297,790 women and 2,800 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer, making breast cancer the most common cancer diagnosis. Prostate cancer is the leading cancer among men and the second most commonly diagnosed overall, with 288,300 expected cases.

Rounding out the top 12 most prevalent cancers and accounting for more than three-quarters of all new cancer cases are:

- Lung cancer.
- Colorectal cancer.
- Skin melanoma.
- Bladder cancer.
- Kidney and renal pelvic cancer.
- Non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
- Uterine cancer.
- Pancreatic cancer.
- Leukemia.
- Thyroid cancer.

SAFE TRAVELS

17 Things for Your Car Emergency Kit

Keep these items in your car for yourself and others should a roadside emergency strike

By Kevin Shelley

Every year, across the world, millions of drivers experience vehicular breakdowns. Finding yourself on the side of the road can be frustrating, scary, and even dangerous.

Thankfully, there are several things you can do to increase safety and shorten the amount of time it takes to get help.

"It's important to remember that the supplies you carry in your vehicle might not just be of use to you, but might also allow you to help others," Dave, a retired EMT and fireman, told The Epoch Times.

Dave recommends keeping the following items in your car in case of an emergency.



1. Contact List

Keep a paper list of numbers you may need to call during emergencies, including AAA details (roadside assistance and member number) and phone numbers of family and friends. It can be difficult to recall numbers under stress, and if something happens to your phone, having a backup that's quickly accessible can be helpful.



2. Money

Credit cards are great, but they require intact electrical and communications systems. Keeping a reasonable stash of money hidden in your vehicle just for emergencies can give you purchasing power when credit cards can't be used.



3. Water

That half-empty bottle of water you just brought into the car can run out faster than you think, especially in hot weather. Keep at least a few bottles of water in your vehicle at all times for emergencies. Extra water is important for you and your passengers.



4. Snacks

A few packages of crackers, cookies, or trail mix are good to have on hand in case of an emergency. While these aren't survival rations, they can provide quick energy and stave off hunger if you have to wait a while for help.

Be sure to rotate your snacks every few months to keep them fresh. Only use items that can stand up to the heat of summer. This means no chocolate.



5. Spare Glasses

If you wear glasses, it's possible that the pair you're wearing can get lost or broken. Keeping extra glasses in your car will help you avoid visual difficulties, especially at night.



6. First-Aid Kit

A small first-aid kit can help you quickly and efficiently deal with minor cuts, scrapes, headaches,



Being ready for an emergency can keep you safe when no one's around to help.

allergies, and nausea.



7. Paper Goods

Paper towels, toilet paper, wet wipes, and tissues can all be helpful in an emergency.



8. Fire Extinguisher

"I can't recall the number of times a small fire was able to progress into a major one simply because nobody had a fire extinguisher," Dave said. Even a small fire extinguisher can help extinguish initial fires.



9. Adequate Fuel

A surprising amount of individuals operate their vehicles with very little fuel. It's best to keep your fuel tank at least half full at all times in case of unexpected delays or detours.



10. Signaling Devices

If you break down on the side of the road, be sure to activate your emergency flashers immediately. This allows other drivers to see you, which is especially important on roads with higher speed limits and heavier traffic.

Road flares can augment emergency flashers to help drivers see you earlier,

especially at night.

There are two types of road flares:

- **CHEMICAL ROAD FLARES:** These burn with a bright, red flame and can be stored for decades with no loss in performance. They do require some degree of knowledge to ignite and place and usually last no more than 30 minutes before burning out. They can also be a fire hazard around dry grass or foliage.

- **ELECTRONIC ROAD FLARES:** These battery-powered road flares are designed to mimic the visibility of their chemical counterparts. They store well, don't present a fire hazard, can shine continuously or flash, and don't need special knowledge to use. However, their batteries must be replaced periodically to ensure they're still strong.

It's important to remember that the supplies you carry in your vehicle might not just be of use to you, but might also allow you to help others.

Dave, retired EMT, fireman

"I recommend electronic road flares unless you've been trained to use their chemical counterparts," Dave said.

Alternatively, you can use reflective triangles, which passively reflect light and don't burn or need batteries. They don't have the warning range of road flares but can still provide protection.

Be sure to read the instructions that come with warning devices and keep them handy.



11. Weather Gear

Having some weather gear on hand can be a lifesaver in bad weather. Dave recommends a good umbrella, a disposable rain poncho, and a hat that can shield your face and neck.

A compact, folding umbrella is preferable to the longer, fixed versions.

While an umbrella is good in lighter rain, a poncho is better for high winds

or heavy downpours when an umbrella can get pulled out of your hand.

If your car breaks down in hot weather, you could be standing in the sun for a while. You won't want to compound your car problems with a bad sunburn on your head and neck, so consider an inexpensive sun hat made of cloth that is easy to store.



12. USB Rechargeable Flashlight

Breaking down at night, especially when the car's power goes out, can leave you in total darkness.

Phone flashlights can work for this purpose but can quickly drain your phone's battery. Keychain lights work well enough but generally don't have much power, and batteries can drain quickly.

Keeping an emergency flashlight in the car can save the day. A rechargeable flashlight that uses the same USB cable that your phone uses is a smart idea.

Keep the flashlight up front with you, and be sure to keep it charged.



13. Emergency Blanket

A good blanket can come to the rescue in cold weather, especially if you tend to dress lightly and rely on the car's heater to keep you warm.

Emergency blankets are small and very packable, but if you have the space, Dave recommends a more versatile standard blanket with some heft.



14. Portable Power Bank

It's essential to keep a phone charging cable in your car and to keep your phone's battery topped off.

However, if your car battery becomes disabled, you may be unable to charge your cellphone with the cable. Having an external battery charger can allow you to maintain communication.

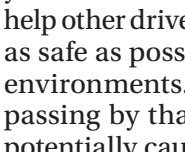
A power bank is a great backup charging option. They are rated in terms of milliampere hours (mAh), and the higher this number, the more power they have to charge. Dave suggests a medium-capacity power bank rated for

5,000 to 10,000 mAh. Many power banks in the 8,000–10,000 mAh class are the same size and shape as smartphones. Be sure to keep your power bank charged.



15. Reflective Safety Vest

Also humorously referred to as "don't hit me" vests, reflective vests usually come in bright yellow or orange and have thin stripes on the front and back that reflect headlights and flashlights. Put one on immediately if you need to get out of your car after a breakdown. This will help other drivers see you and keep you as safe as possible, especially in dark environments. It also informs those passing by that you have a problem, potentially causing them to call for or provide assistance.



16. Utility Items

The following utility items can be helpful in an emergency:

- **DUCT TAPE:** "Never underestimate the ability of duct tape to fix nearly anything—for a while," Dave said.

- **MULTITOOL:** This is a small tool with a range of functions, including pliers, a knife, screwdrivers, and scissors.

- **JUMPER CABLES:** These will allow you to start your car or help others when a car battery is drained.



17. Backpack or Gym Bag

A backpack or gym bag can store most or all of these emergency items in a single, tidy location. Choosing a brightly colored backpack or gym bag can help you spot your supplies immediately.

Keep in mind that the items on this list aren't intended for survival scenarios but are designed to assist you or help others in the event of a roadside breakdown.

Kevin Shelley is a licensed occupational therapist with over 30 years of experience in major health care settings. He is a health columnist for The Epoch Times.

MINDSET MATTERS

The 'Saad Truth' About Happiness

A new book by professor and psychologist Gad Saad outlines the sometimes surprising routes to life satisfaction

By Susan C. Olmstead

Persistence, failure, responsibility, and even regret lie along the path to true happiness, according to author and professor Gad Saad.

In his new book, "The Saad Truth about Happiness: 8 Secrets for Leading the Good Life," Mr. Saad shares what he's learned about achieving happiness—and many of his insights are unexpected.

Mr. Saad, who holds a doctorate in marketing, defines happiness as "an enduring sense of a life that has been lived well," he told The Epoch Times.

"It's a very intuitive thing," he said.

"If you're sitting on your proverbial porch when you're 85, looking back on your life and you say, 'You know what? I've really lived a good life. I've had a great marriage, I've raised great kids, I've had a job that gave me purpose and meaning, I'm always playing around, there are few things that I regret in life' ... that's what I mean by existential happiness."

Mr. Saad is a professor of marketing at the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University in Quebec and a blogger for Psychology Today. He also is the author of "The Parasitic Mind: How Infectious Ideas Are Killing Common Sense" and has been interviewed by Dave Rubin, Glenn Beck, and Joe Rogan.

"I always joke that just by name alone, I was predestined to write this book," Mr. Saad told host Jan Jekielek on an episode of EpochTV's "American Thought Leaders." His surname means "felicity, happiness, and prosperity" in Arabic.

True to his name, Mr. Saad is content and self-assured. In fact, he was prompted to write "The Saad Truth about Happiness" in part because of this reputation. People often ask him how he can keep a playful attitude while tackling thorny issues, he said. He's used to hearing, "What's your secret, professor Saad?"

This question led him to begin to consider the question of happiness. "If you would have asked me three years ago when 'The Parasitic Mind' came out if I, at that point, had an idea to write a book on happiness, I would have said 'no,' but that's the beauty of life ... there are all these sort of serendipitous things that happen," he said.

Mr. Saad is very active on social media, and he noticed that his more prescriptive posts seemed to especially resonate with people.

"As an academic psychologist, I'm usually in the sphere of descriptive behavior—I simply try to describe why people do the things that they do," he told The Epoch Times.

But he found that especially online, a lot of people were looking for guidance. All the same, tackling the huge topic of happiness was daunting, he said. Much ink has been spilled in this pursuit, after all.

"Of all the topics that philosophers have ever studied and written about, probably the good life and how to seek a happy life is the most common one," he said.

More Than Positive Thinking

Although Mr. Saad writes that a "silver-lining mindset is truly a vaccine against life's vagaries," and that we can train ourselves to think in a more optimistic, happier fashion, he recognizes that it takes more than positive thinking to become happy. His book also covers the realities of regret, rejection, and setbacks in everyone's lives.

"I knew the book would have to have a section on regret, since so often when we look back on our lives we are shackled by looming intrusive thoughts of regret that we didn't do this or we did that," he told The Epoch Times. In fact, he writes that regret, especially over things we neglected to do, can eat away at us "like a flesh-eating fungus."

Taking meaningful action today to achieve happiness will eradicate this type of regret, he writes. And "anticipatory regret"—the fear of what may happen if one does not take action—can be

Continued on Page 20

useful in spurring people to work toward achieving their life goals.

He also addresses the value of persistence and grit when facing failure and rejection—as we all do—and recommends adopting an "anti-fragility" mindset:

"People can never be maximally happy if they navigate through life with a brittle, fragile personality or mindset," he writes. "Whether referring to wine, trees, human lungs, or human minds, among countless other biological systems, we benefit from being anti-fragile."

Rejecting a fragile mindset leads to personal dignity and agency, keys to living a good life.

Those with an internal locus of control take more responsibility for their lives.

Personal Responsibility Versus Victimhood

Mr. Saad said on "American Thought Leaders" that he and Jordan Peterson are preaching something that he thinks "should be obvious to most well-functioning people, which is that personal responsibility ... made the West great."

Those with an internal locus of control take more responsibility for their lives, he said. These people view things that happen to them as their own doing.

"So [they think], 'I did well on the exam because I'm smart and I studied well.' On the other hand, [an example of] an external locus of control would be ... I did poorly on the exam because [of] the professor ... because it's written in the sky, because it's God's will, because it's destiny:'"

"As you might imagine, people typically attribute successes internally and

attribute failures externally. But as you [also] might imagine, many of the important initiatives that you undertake in life are going to require that you get off the proverbial couch and have personal agency," Mr. Saad said.

Today's "victimology ethos" is driven by an external locus of control, he said. For example, he said, people who are convinced of their victimhood think: "I'm not doing well in life because I'm a victim because of something that happened to my ancestors 300 years ago. Let me wallow infinitely in the pity pool."

"Whereas I argue that very few people have had the tragic childhood experiences that I had growing up in the Lebanese Civil War," he said. "It is part of my identity, it is part of my history, but yet I don't wallow in it. To the contrary, I use that as impetus to succeed in life."

"The best revenge, as they say, is a life lived well. Having a sense of personal dignity, personal agency, and personal responsibility" is part of the recipe for a good life, he said.

The Right Spouse, the Right Job

The first keys to happiness Mr. Saad addresses in "The Saad Truth About Happiness" are the key life decisions of choosing the right life partner and the ideal job.

These two key decisions are not the only big ones in life, but "they guarantee a great bucketload of either happiness or misery," he said.

"When I wake up in the morning, if the person I wake up next to is someone that I like and appreciate and respect, well, that's a better thing than if I wake up next to someone I can't stand. Then I put my feet on the floor and I'm heading off to my job. If that job gives me a great sense of purpose and meaning, I'm well on my way to climbing Mount Happiness."

"When I come home at night, if I'm excited to return to that person next to whom I woke up in the morning, then I've pretty much cracked the secret of happiness."

Choosing a Mate: Feathers Matter

While we can never guarantee that the choices that we make are going to ensure us happiness, Mr. Saad told The Epoch Times, "There are certain tried-and-tested maxims [about mate choice] that increase the probability of us being happy."

Mr. Saad contrasts two ideas from evolutionary psychology: that "opposites attract" and that "birds of a feather flock together."

Continued on Page 20

ART_PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ Those who find a profession that offers creativity and freedom tend to be the most fulfilled.



▲ A small bag with your emergency items can give you a level of comfort, especially when venturing into less populated areas.

MINDSET MATTERS

The ‘Saad Truth’ About Happiness

Continued from Page 19

“The research is unequivocally clear that when it comes to long-term success of a marriage or a long-term romantic union, it’s overwhelmingly the ‘birds of a feather flock together’ maxim that’s operative,” he said.

But the “feathers” you select matter, he added. “It’s not eye color, it’s not hair color, but rather it’s shared life goals, shared belief systems, shared attitudes towards foundational principles.”

If a couple’s opinions are well-aligned about these things, “it doesn’t guarantee that one of you won’t cheat on the other and it will bring divorce, but life is a statistical game and so you want to maximize the chances that you are making the right choice,” he said.



The Saad Truth About Feminism

Radical feminism has in many ways complicated mate selection for both men and women. Mr. Saad writes, “Militant feminism ... is an ideology that has imparted immeasurable misery on millions of women, because it denies human nature and the reality of sexual differences.”

Militant feminism is an example of an “idea pathogen,” or a parasitic idea that causes people to slowly walk to “the abyss of infinite lunacy,” Mr. Saad said.

“Social constructivism is the idea that we are all born ... without any predispositions or biological imperatives, and it’s only socialization that makes us who we are. Biophobia is the fear of using biology to explain human affairs,” he said.

“**Militant feminism ... is an ideology that has imparted immeasurable misery on millions of women, because it denies human nature and the reality of sexual differences.**”

Gad Saad, author, professor, psychologist

Radical feminism piggybacks on these ideas by arguing that there are no real evolutionary, biologically based differences between men and women, he said. “[It teaches that] women are taught to be more sexually restrained, whereas men are afforded greater leeway when it comes to that. Well of course that’s nonsense in that, yes, it is true that that socialization process operates in this manner, but it operates in this manner for clear biological reasons. Women incur a much greater cost in the mating market if they make a poor choice.”

This may seem unfair, Mr. Saad said.

“But it’s called reality. It’s called nature. It’s called biology.

“Equity feminism [as opposed to radical feminism] makes sense because it says that men and women should be treated equally under the law and of course, most reasonable people would support that.” But that doesn’t mean that men and women are indistinguishable from each other.

For instance, he said, the prospect of having meaningless one-night stands is much more attractive to men than it is to women.

“So when radical feminism grants affordance for women to engage in that behavior, it doesn’t take a fancy psychologist to predict that many women will wake up feeling very unsatisfied with their mate choices. To the extent that radical feminism preaches certain prescriptive behaviors that are contrary to human nature, it is going to lead to misery.”



▲ Finding the right spouse to share your years with can help ensure a happy life.

Personal Agency Leads to Happiness at Work

Occupational happiness hinges on two criteria: creativity and freedom, according to Mr. Saad.

He argues that any profession or job that allows one to satisfy a creative impulse will lead to purpose and meaning.

“I could be a stand-up comic creating a new routine, I could be a chef, I could be an architect, I could be an author or a podcaster. All of these professions, while very, very different, share one thing in common: the person in question is creating something new out of nothing. All other things equal, that gives me great purpose and meaning,” he said.

The second element to having a happy occupational life, according to Mr. Saad, is what he calls temporal freedom—the ability to have control over one’s time while making a living. Having little leeway while working is not a pathway to personal dignity, he told The Epoch Times.

“If possible, if you can hit those two

marks [of creativity and freedom], I think you’re likely to be happy at your job,” he said.

To those whose occupational freedom and temporal freedom are limited, he advised finding outlets outside of work hours.

“You can instantiate these things once you get off work,” he said.

“An insurance adjuster is important and a bus driver is important, but what about when you finish your work, instead of going and watching mindlessly four hours of TV, you go and enroll in that ceramics course which you’ve always hoped to take?”

“There are ways in which I can still immerse myself in creative processes even if it’s not at my job.”

Susan C. Olmstead writes about health and medicine, food, social issues, and culture. Her work has appeared in The Epoch Times, Children’s Health Defense’s The Defender, Salvo Magazine, and many other publications.



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