

My Take on “The China Study”

October 29th, 2008

Book Summary

The Most Comprehensive Study of Nutrition Ever Conducted

Review of The China Study, by Collin Campbell, PhD.

Note the following: Dr. Campbell and his colleagues have received seventy-four grant-years of funding over a thirty-five year period because of the importance of their research. They have been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the American Cancer Society and the American Institute for Cancer Research.

His research studies with animals began 45 years ago in 1960, where he was able to turn cancer off or on at will. He then took his work to "the most comprehensive study of diet, lifestyle and disease ever done with humans in the history of biomedical research. It was a massive undertaking jointly arranged through Cornell University, Oxford University and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. The New York Times called it the ‘Grand Prix of Epidemiology.’" (The study of how diseases spread) This project surveyed a vast range of diseases and diet and lifestyle factors in rural China and, more recently, in Taiwan. More commonly known as the China Study, this project eventually produced more than 8,000 statistically significant associations between various dietary factors and disease!

The China Study "used more than 200 professional workers as they carried out the nationwide study in China." When you realize that China represents 1/4th the world's population with very diverse latitudes, cultures, and climatic conditions, his study all by itself is very impressive. In addition, they added 65 more countries across the world to round out the study. "Because this survey was a one-of-a-kind opportunity, we intended that it be the best of its kind ever undertaken. It was comprehensive; it was high quality; and its uniqueness allowed new opportunities to investigate diet and disease that were never before possible."

"What made this project especially remarkable is that, among the many associations that are relevant to diet and disease, so many pointed to the same finding: people who ate the most animal-based food got the most chronic disease. Even relatively small intakes of animal-based foods were associated with adverse effects. People who ate the most plant-based foods were the healthiest and tended to avoid chronic disease. These results could not be ignored..."

Further, Dr. Campbell says: "Through all of this, I have come to see that the benefits produced by eating a plant-based diet are far more diverse and impressive than any drug or surgery used in medical practice. Heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, stroke and hypertension, arthritis, cataracts, Alzheimer's disease, impotence and all sorts of other chronic diseases can be largely prevented. These diseases, which

generally occur with aging and tissue degeneration, kill the majority of us before our time.

"Additionally, impressive evidence now exists to show that advanced heart disease, relatively advanced cancers of certain types, diabetes and a few other degenerative diseases can be reversed by diet. I remember when my superiors were only reluctantly accepting the evidence of nutrition being able to prevent heart disease, for example, but vehemently denying its ability to reverse such a disease when already advanced. But the evidence can no longer be ignored. Those in science or medicine who shut their minds to such an idea are being more than stubborn; they are being irresponsible.

"One of the more exciting benefits of good nutrition is the prevention of diseases that are thought to be due to genetic predisposition. We now know that we can largely avoid these 'genetic' diseases even though we may harbor the gene (or genes) that is (are) responsible for the disease..."

In their experimental animal studies, they could turn cancer off and on at will by adjusting the levels of protein. "What protein consistently and strongly promoted cancer? Casein, which makes up 87% of cow's milk protein, promoted all stages of the cancer process. What type of protein did not promote cancer, even at high levels of intake? The safe proteins were from plants..."

As he says, "THE BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE are enormous. I want you to know that you can:

- live longer
- look and feel younger
- have more energy
- lose weight
- lower your blood cholesterol
- prevent and even reverse heart disease
- lower your risk of prostate, breast and other cancers
- preserve your eyesight in you later years
- prevent and treat diabetes
- avoid surgery in many instances
- vastly decrease the need for pharmaceutical drugs
- keep your bones strong
- avoid impotence
- avoid stroke
- prevent kidney stones
- keep your baby from getting Type 1 diabetes
- alleviate constipation
- lower your blood pressure
- avoid Alzheimer's
- beat arthritis
- and more...

These are only some of the benefits, and all of them can be yours. The price? Simply changing your diet. I don't know that it has ever been so easy or so relatively effortless to achieve such profound benefits."

Dr. Campbell then gives us eight principles of food and health;

- Nutrition represents the combined activities of countless food substances. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

- Vitamin supplements are not a panacea for good health.
- There are virtually no nutrients in animal-based foods that are not better provided by plants.
- Genes do not determine disease on their own. Genes function only by being activated, or expressed, and nutrition plays a critical role in determining which genes, good and bad, are expressed.
- Nutrition can substantially control the adverse effects of noxious chemicals.
- The same nutrition that prevents disease in its early stages (before diagnosis) can also halt or reverse disease in its later stages (after diagnosis).
- Nutrition that is truly beneficial for one chronic disease will support health across the board.
- Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence. All parts are interconnected."

Chapter 12 is entitled *How to Eat*. He gives details, but has some summary statements: "...eat a whole foods, plant-based diet, while minimizing the consumption of refined foods, added salt and added fats... The findings from the China Study indicate that the lower the percentage of animal-based foods that are consumed, the greater the health benefits - ..."

In Part IV of the book, the bravery and courage of Dr. Campbell to speak the truth are to be highly commended. He says, "Americans are confused, and I will tell you why." It "has to do with how health information is generated and communicated and who controls such activities... I'm ready to tell the world what is wrong with the system... The distinctions between making a profit and promoting health have become blurred." He says that there are "massive amounts of misinformation, for which average American consumers pay twice. They provide the tax money to do the research, and then they provide the money for their health care to treat their largely preventable diseases.

"WHEN IS THE LAST TIME that you went to the doctor and he or she told you what to eat or what not to eat? But the vast majority of Americans will fall prey to one of the chronic diseases of affluence... there is a wealth of published research that suggests these diseases are a result of poor nutrition, not poor genes or bad luck. So why doesn't the medical system take nutrition seriously?"

"Four words: money, ego, power and control. While it is unfair to generalize about individual doctors, it is safe to say that the system they work in, the system that currently takes responsibility for promoting the health of Americans, is failing us."

What are the diseases of American "affluence?" Dr. Campbell has a chapter on each one of them listed below. This affluence allows most Americans to buy what they choose, and they typically choose to buy highly processed foods from a meat and dairy centered diet. These choices have subtly and seditiously lead to these epidemic diseases. Traditional medical science has not been able to curb these diseases. They are all increasing, but Dr. Campbell tells how they can be curbed. As discussed in the book, these diseases include:

(1) Heart disease: "killing 40% of Americans; Women's death rate from heart disease is eight times higher than their death rate from breast cancer... And costing \$78.1 billion in 2002 just for physician services and hospital care."

(2) Obesity: "...two out of three adult Americans are overweight, and one-third of the adult population is obese. Medical care costs in 1999 were \$70 billion and in 2002, \$100 billion... Add another \$30 – \$40 billion out-of-pocket money... trying to keep off the weight..."

(3) Diabetes "In the eight years from 1990 to 1998, the incidence of diabetes increased 33%. Over 8% of American adults (16 million) are diabetic... The economic toll of diabetes in the U.S.: over \$130 billion a

year."

(4) Common Cancers: Breast, Prostate, Large Bowel (Colon and Rectal) "Roughly half a million Americans this year (2005) will go to the doctor's office and be told that they have" one of these three cancers – representing 40% of all new cancer patients. These cancers devastate the lives of the victims as well as the lives of their families and friends. The medical costs associated therewith are astronomical.

(5) Autoimmune Diseases: "NO GROUP OF DISEASES is more insidious than autoimmune diseases... the body systematically attacks itself... A quarter million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with one of the forty separate autoimmune diseases each year... There are 400,000 Americans who are victims of multiple sclerosis, and millions more with other autoimmune diseases."

(6) Wide-Ranging Effects: Bone, Kidney, Eye and Brain Diseases: Osteoporosis is epidemic in America as are kidney stones. "Macular degeneration is the leading cause of... blindness among people over age sixty-five. Over 1.6 million Americans suffer from this disease, many of whom become blind."

Alzheimer's and dementia are epidemic in America. In his pioneering book *Brain Longevity* Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa cites the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Institute on Aging, that the government spends 50% of its tax dollars on the elderly and in ten years that is anticipated to grow to 75%. The article also said that "almost 50 percent of all people older than eighty-five have Alzheimer's..." Khalsa says, "Over the next few decades, an unprecedented number of people will join the ranks of the elderly. Unless current trends in cognitive decline are reversed, this 'graying of America' will create a public health crisis." Currently, there are 4 million persons with Alzheimer's. This is expected to increase to 10 million over the next 15 years. With the above trends, over 30 years, 20% of the population will be over 65 and about 90% of them will have Alzheimer's. Of this Khalsa says, "To me, that notion is absolutely horrifying. If it happens, it will be a social holocaust. In the Epilogue of his book, Khalsa recaps, "...I do not believe [these trends] will [continue]. I believe that millions of us, working together, and working on our own, will reverse these trends... As we age, we will remain healthy. We will remain productive."

The incredible message of Dr. Campbell's book and from my own personal experience is that all of the above epidemic American diseases are preventable and reversible! This is wonderful news. Dr. Khalsa has seen reversals with large numbers of his dementia patients and even in some cases of those with Alzheimer's. I personally know people who have reversed osteoporosis and macular degeneration. The body has a miraculous ability to heal itself when we feed it properly – the proper nutrients provided by the Designer of our bodies.

Not only are the medical and pharmaceutical communities turning their backs on the data, but "The government is turning a blind eye to the evidence as well as to the millions of Americans who suffer from nutrition-related illnesses. The covenant of trust between the U.S. government and the American citizen has been broken. The United States government is not only failing to put out our fires, it is actively fanning the flames," says Dr. Campbell.

Many may wonder why these distortions occur in the way health and nutritional information are shared, which includes disease prevention and cure. Dr. Campbell summarizes it well: "As you will come to see, much is governed by the Golden Rule: he who has the gold makes the rules. There are powerful, influential and enormously wealthy industries that stand to lose a vast amount of money if Americans start shifting to a plant-based diet.

"The entire system – government, science, medicine, industry and media – promotes profits over health, technology over food and confusion over clarity." Because Dr. Campbell has significant exposure, leadership, and interaction with the whole nutritional system, he has been able to see how the

disinformation arises and why there is so much confusion. His Section IV in this regard is extremely interesting reading – entitled WHY HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THIS BEFORE? He has first hand experience.

Robert C. Richardson, Ph.D. and Nobel Laureate says it well, "Colin Campbell's the China Study is an important and readable book. With his son Tom, he discusses studies of the relationship between diet and disease. His conclusions about the harmful consequences of animal proteins are startling. Equally surprising has been his difficulty in bring the results to the public. It is a story which needs to be heard."

"The China Study is a rare treat. Finally, a world-renowned nutritional scholar has explained the truth about diet and health in a way that everyone can easily understand – a startling truth that everyone needs to know," says Dr. Douglas J. Lisle, and Alan Goldhamer.

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