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RATIONAL EVIDENCE-BASED COMMENT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS. WE SAY EXACTLY WHAT WE THINK

Laughter the best Medicine: Hunter-gatherer works from home. **Evolutionary Biology:** Why different blood types? **Myth Busting:** Water intoxication – Mom nearly dies. **Humbug Watch:** “The Myth” of Man the Hunter? **Q&A:** Hemp Seed oil/Chronic Fatigue; Almond Milk Ingredients. **News Shorts:** UK Sugar Rationing boosted health of citizens conceived in the 1940s; Cranberries help prevent UTI. **Fad Diet Watch:** Vegan Child Death. **What I’m Reading:** The Matter with Things (1) by Iain McGilchrist. **Evolutionary Upbringing** Narvaez: Homeless Babies at Home! Humans are highly immature at full-term birth.

Laughter the best Medicine



“I’m a hunter gatherer, but I’m working from home.”

Cr. Matt, Daily Telegraph

I was tempted to leave this cartoon without comment. But it does highlight a major mismatch between life today and our forager past: the reality that, every day you had to be ‘up and doing’. If not, you go hungry.

Nature provided its own ‘rationing system’ which, in today’s world of abundance, we have by-passed.

See: **UK Sugar Rationing boosted health of citizens conceived in the 1940s**, page 2, and its concept of “The Chesterton Fence”.

Evolutionary Biology

Why do people have different blood types?

That is a question posed in a recent article in The Scientist [1]. A question that has been around for a very long time. I first tackled it 26 years ago in [Sept 1998](#) page 4 [2], and **The Blood Group Diet** in [Feb 2001](#) [3]. There is still no answer! But the ABO group arose 20 million years ago [4] and we share it with other great apes. Just like for a forager, it should have no influence on the way you live your life.

Myth Busting

Water Intoxication: Mom nearly dies



Nina Munro, 41, drank around four liters (1 gallon) of water a day in an attempt to ‘flush out’ what she thought was a cold. But the excessive amounts of

water, depleted her sodium levels and she had a seizure.

Ms. Munro was put in intensive care for five days while doctors battled to stabilize her sodium levels.

‘Doctors later told me they didn’t know how I survived it,’ Ms Munro said. ‘I was slowly drowning myself and I didn’t even know it.’ She added: “My husband said I wouldn’t do anything without a glass of water by my side. Now the doctors told me to drink for thirst only.”

My View? Just so! “Drink to your thirst only!” See: **Official: Drink to your Thirst**, [July 2015](#) [5].

But this is just confirmation of my 22-year campaign against the propaganda spread by the bottled water companies. These are scare stories claiming that if we are not guzzling their products by the bucketful, we are in mortal danger of dehydration. See: **“Drink at Least 8 Glasses of Water a Day” – Really?** [Sept 2002](#) [6]; **Senseless on Water**, [Aug 2003](#) [7] and **Doc: Eight Glasses of Water a Day Mantra is ‘Nonsense’**, [July 2011](#) [8] >4

Humbug Watch

Debate: “The Myth” of Man the Hunter?

“Research assistant” Abigail Anderson of Seattle Pacific University, WA, USA doesn’t like the idea of gendered roles in forager societies. She opines in a scientific article [9] published in the prestigious journal, PLOS One, that women hunted just as much as men:

“Evidence ... supports ... that women from a broad range of cultures intentionally hunt for subsistence.

“These results aim to shift the male-hunter, female-gatherer paradigm to account for the significant role females have in hunting, thus dramatically shifting stereotypes of labor, as well as mobility.”

This story was picked up with relish by the mass media including Forbes and The New York Times who headlined: **“Move Over, Men: Women Were Hunters, Too”**.

However, a stinging rebuke has been delivered, in the journal **Evolution & Human Behavior**, by a panel of 15 eminent ethnologists including **Sheina Lew-Levy** whom we met in **Gendered Play in Forager Kids**, [Aug 2023](#) [10].

The panel found evidence of deplorably sloppy scholarship. They cite: poor methodology; sampling and selection bias; improper exclusion of contrary evidence; selective inclusion of unreliable sources; errors in categorization of alleged women hunting societies; inclusion of non-forager societies; inadequate search of authoritative sources; double-counting of >4

Questions

Hemp Seed Oil/Chronic Fatigue

Q. *I have suffered with chronic fatigue syndrome since 2017. I am much better now but I still get the Post-Exertional Malaise symptoms.*

Two things that really helped me are hemp seed oil (which I remember from studying your book) and royal jelly.

Is there any other supplement / vitamin / food you recommend I should take to help with my condition?

There is a lot of debate about fish oil and I wanted your opinion about this compared to hemp seed oil.

A. As you will know, chronic fatigue syndrome is one of those conditions whose cause has not yielded to intense research and for which there is no sure-fire remedy.

Hemp seed oil (the sort not containing cannabis) is rich in a myriad of useful compounds, all of which support a multitude of vital bodily processes [11]. The most important of these compounds is the omega-3 oil, ALA (alpha-linolenic acid).

ALA strongly quenches inflammation – and chronic inflammation is the common denominator in provoking so many human ailments. See **Anti-inflammatory diet**, [Sept 2024](#) [12]

In this regard the omega-3 fish oils DHA & EPA are even more potent than ALA in suppressing inflammation and so could be a good substitute for hemp oil.

It is interesting that you find royal jelly helpful since no careful trials have found it useful for anything at all. But what do we know?

Maybe I'm a little prejudiced – my grandfather had a large apiary but he steadfastly refused to produce royal jelly on the grounds it meant killing off all the baby bees. "Royal jelly is only good for turning infertile females into fertile ones", he would say, "is that what you are looking for?"

As for vitamins, supplements, and so forth I have no evidence that anything works.

All I can add is that I do know of one follower who got control of their chronic fatigue by living the way we say: not just on diet but also on sunshine, sunlight, sleep, stress and, in the end, on physical activity.

Almond Milk Ingredients

Q. *One of the smallest ingredients list I can find for almond milk has two additives: gellan gum and vitamin A palmitate. Are these added ingredients inflammatory items? I would rather find a single-ingredient almond milk, if possible!*

A. Gellan gum is produced by a bacterium and, it was first discovered in lily plant tissue in 1978. It is a thickening agent often used as a substitute for agar. It is put in almond milk to maintain the particles of almond nut in suspension.

An EU Food Safety panel found that gellan gum (E number E418) is not absorbed and is not fermented by gut bugs [13]. So it is basically inert and is considered safe at any reasonable level of consumption.

However there is another consideration: gellan gum does change the way the gut lining works: "microvilli adhered to one another and were covered with their contents" [14]. Microvilli are microscopic finger-like protrusions on the gut wall which absorb nutrients from the digesting food.

As for inflammation, we just don't know. It is possible that alterations to the gut lining are inflammatory – but maybe not.

All things considered, considering the minute amounts of gellan gum actually consumed in almond milk, I do not see it as an ingredient of concern.

Vitamin A palmitate is the form of vitamin A as it is stored and used in the human body. So it is perfectly safe at normal levels of consumption. It is added to nut milk to emulate the same content in dairy milk.

As for inflammation, again we don't know, but, as an integral compound in human biochemistry, presumably not.

Finally, for additive-free almond milk, some purists make their own – by puréeing almonds and blending with water. The only drawback is that it soon separates out to oil at the top and sediment at the bottom. Give the bottle a good shake each time you use it!

News Shorts

UK Sugar Rationing boosted health of citizens conceived in the 1940s



Sugar rationing during and after the second world war seems to have improved the health of people conceived in the UK at the time, cutting their risk of developing type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure decades later [15].

UK war-time rationing restricted sugar intake to 8 teaspoons per day (which is less than that in just one 12oz can of Coca-Cola!)

This level is within current dietary guidelines, yet consumption nearly doubled immediately rationing restrictions were lifted in 1953.

The researchers found that early-life rationing reduced diabetes by 35% and hypertension risk by 20%, and delayed disease onset by 4 and 2 years respectively.

About one third of the benefit occurred in the womb where the mother's intake of sugar was similarly restricted.

My View? In a state of nature not only sugar (in the form of honey) was rationed, but also every other food too.

Nature provided a 'Chesterton Fence' which, in today's world of abundance, we have unthinkingly

torn down. (The thinker, GK Chesterton, advised: “Don’t take down a fence until you know why someone thought it important to put it there in the first place.)

I am one of the beneficiaries of 11 years (from conception) of wartime sugar rationing so am I in favor of bringing it back? That is a tempting thought!

But, in my view, someone should try to put back a form of Chesterton Fence, however modest, and governments are in the best position to do so.

So I support concerted official efforts to demonize sugar and for sugar taxes (for example) to limit its consumption.

See: **Big Sugar: Scotch’d the Snake not Killed it?** [March 2014](#) [16], and **Laughter the best Medicine**, page 1.

Cranberries help prevent UTI (Urinary Tract Infection)

According to German researchers, “Recurrent UTI poses a challenge for the treating physician. The measures to be taken must be considered on an individual basis. Vulnerable groups, such as older patients, need special attention.” [17]

In response, Mexican researchers cite a history of studies [18] finding that the use of cranberry products is effective in preventing the recurrence of UTI, especially in older women [19].

Cranberry products contain “proanthocyanidins” which prevent bacteria from adhering to the urinary tract walls.

“Proanthocyanidins” are a class of micro-nutrients known as poly-phenols. They are also present in grape-seed extract, and in red wine.

A ‘Cochrane Review’ [20] found that: “[Studies] support the use of cranberry products to reduce the risk of symptomatic, culture-verified UTIs in women with recurrent UTIs.” [21]

My View? It seems to me that this is a topic where ‘even angels fear

to tread’. But if you are an older woman suffering recurring UTI, it seems innocuous enough to try cranberry products as a prophylactic – and they might even work.

Fad Diet Watch

Vegan Child Death



The three-year-old son of a ‘strictly vegan’ couple (photo), was found buried in their garden two years after he died. He was suffering from bone fractures, severe malnutrition, rickets, anemia, stunted growth and severe dental decay before his death [22,23].

The parents, Tai-zamarai Yasharahyalah, and Naiyahmi Yasharahyalah are on trial in Birmingham, UK, charged with causing or allowing the death of a child, to willful neglect, to child cruelty, and to perverting the course of justice.

My View? I have written many times about how the vegan diet is non-human and ideologically driven. It is hard, but possible, to make it work for adults (See: **Vegetarians and Vegans, Deadly Harvest, Chapter 7** [24], page 186) but puts babies and toddlers at immense risk. See: **Vegan mother guilty over death of 18-month old son, Aug 2022** [25]; **Vegan Diet in Young Children, Feb 2021** [26]; **Vegan Diet: Baby gets Rickets, Jan 2019** [27].

What I’m Reading

I’ve always got several books on the go which have some relevance to my work so I thought I would share some of their insights.

Savanna-bred brains subverted by Western reductive thought (part 1)

I was triggered into reading the following book by listening to a podcast where its author, leading

neuroscientist Dr Iain McGilchrist, discusses it with evolutionary psychiatrist Dr Jordan Peterson: <https://youtu.be/gN09qnHhPKA>

The book is entitled:

The Matter with Things: Our Brains, our Delusions, and the Unmasking of the World [28]

It is a massive work of some 1,600 pages in two tomes, and I am about a quarter the way through. What I have learnt so far:

The brains of all mammals, including ours, are split into two halves: the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. Each hemisphere has its role and way of being. Even so: “Both hemispheres are to some degree, in some fashion, involved in everything.”

The left hemisphere makes rapid assumptions and jumps to a conclusion which it narrows down to a ‘certainty’. It will then defend this certainty against evidence to the contrary even to where it will confabulate (make up) stories in its defense. The right brain, which sees life from a top-down, global point of view, over-rides the left brain where appropriate.

This happens a lot, not only in a forager’s life, but in our own too. Who hasn’t startled at a snake in the grass only to realize a split second later, that it is only a coil of garden hose? That is the left brain springing into immediate life-saving action, only for the right brain to bring context to the situation.

The left brain reduces everything to its component parts. It has difficulty dealing with what is not explicit (“It largely fails to understand metaphor, myth, irony, tones of voice, jokes, and poetry, and tends to take things literally”).

It is good at carrying out procedures (it knows its multiplication tables) and less good at understanding the real world meaning of the procedures.

Lots more to come [next month](#).

Evolutionary Upbringing

Dr Narvaez [29] writes a weekly blog. We highlight from time to time her articles of interest to us.

Homeless Babies—At Home! The importance of the second attachment system.

“Fetuses are deeply attached to mother, ensconced in their mother’s body for around 10 [9?] months, their needs being met automatically without any effort on their part. They expect the same when they emerge into the arms of mother and community.” Full article here [30].

Humans are highly immature at full-term birth

“At least 75% of brain volume grows postnatally [after birth]. It takes humans about 30 years to reach adulthood. Mentoring and support are needed all along the way.” Full article here [31].

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Water Intoxication: Mom nearly dies

And so it goes on, down through the years, until the last article just over a year ago: **Over-hydration: Yet another Death, July 2023** [32].

So, just like a forager did, just “Drink to your thirst”. The only exception will be those individuals who, for some reason, have lost the thirst reflex. They will have to follow another guideline: drink just enough to leave your urine straw-colored.

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Debate: “The Myth” of Man the Hunter?

... the same data; incorrectly designating societies as having women hunting when they don’t; and including the rare occasion when a woman might hunt small

animals under pressure of circumstances.

The panel concludes, quite modestly: “We caution against ethnographic revisionism that projects Westernized conceptions of labor and its value onto foraging societies” [33].

Another formulation of the rebuttal can be found here: [34]

My View? I’m all for contrarian thinking but here we seem to have Abigail Anderson doctoring scientific enquiry to favor a particular ideological outcome.

Who is Abigail anyway? We don’t know. She is not a professor at the university (I checked) so presumably, as a “research assistant”, she is some kind of student – perhaps, at least, post-grad.

Paleo in a Nutshell: Geoff’s latest work encapsulates, concisely and easily, current thinking on living the way nature intended. www.paleo-nut-shell.com

email: admin@NaturalEater.com



Paleo Harvest Cookbook: Over 170 delicious, Bond Precept conforming recipes www.paleo-harvest.com



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