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Human Mentality: Psychedelics in Perspective (5). **Jungle Lore:** Beware misuse of "Paleo" designation. **Human Nature:** How to spot a rich guy revisited. **Briefing:** The omega-3 index. **Q&A:** Barley revisited. **News Shorts:** Daylight-saving time change promotes poor lifestyle; Olive oil beats back dementia? Krill oil for knee osteo-arthritis? **Feedback:** Peter Harris.

Human Mentality

Psychedelics in Perspective (5)

[Last month](#) we looked at American historian Brian Muraresku's [1] brain-storming idea that farming was triggered by the discovery of how to brew a mind-altering beverage, beer, from barley!

We then saw how psychedelics work by weakening the brain's ability to impose order through its "Default Mode Network" (or 'Ego') dissolving the sense of self and allowing more chaos to filter through.

Prof. Timothy Leary was an American psychologist known for his strong advocacy of psychedelic drugs. As a clinical psychologist at Harvard University, in 1960 Leary founded the Harvard Psilocybin Project, testing the therapeutic effects of LSD and psilocybin (from magic mushrooms) which, at the time, were legal in the U.S.

He popularized hippy counter-culture catchphrases that promoted his hippy philosophy, such as "think for yourself and question authority" and "turn on, tune in, drop out".

This was at the time of the Vietnam war and President Richard Nixon called Leary "the most dangerous man in America" and, in 1968, made psychedelics illegal.

Wryly, Canadian clinical evolutionary psychologist, Dr Jordan Peterson, suggests that had Leary changed his catch-phrase to "Turn on, tune in, grow up", psychedelics would not have been banned and we would not have lost 2 generations of research on their useful properties. Does it matter? >p 3

Jungle Lore

Beware misuse of "Paleo" designation

"High-protein diets, known as "Paleolithic diets", are popular..."

"Diets rich in animal and/or plant proteins, known as Paleolithic diets..."

Phrases such as these raised my hackles when I read them in a scientific press release. It was about a paper [2] claiming that Paleolithic diets with their "high protein load" of 30% are risky. >p 3

Human Nature

How to spot a rich man revisited



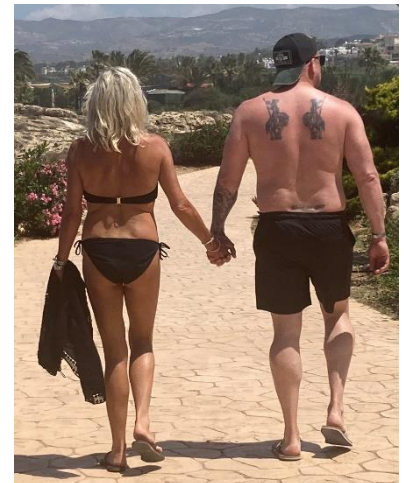
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In how to spot a rich guy, [May 2006](#) [3], I had this stock photo of a common trope. Over the eons of evolutionary history, genes have spread better if they were sitting in women who were good at securing a man who is a good provider and is strong on protection and security. This, in ancient forager tribes, meant finding a man with status.

Surveys uniformly confirm that women are genetically attracted to power and wealth in a man. In contrast, men seek fertility (as detected by physical

attractiveness see: **Female Attractiveness, [Nov 2005](#)** [4].

It is said that all this is changing now with women's equality. Even so I could not resist taking this photo below of a couple walking the seafront where we live in Paphos, Cyprus:



<https://bit.ly/3SSi0O5>

The guy was flabby and had a beer belly. Was he rich? Probably!

Briefing

The Omega-3 Index

I have spoken frequently of the importance of omega-3 oils in the diet since modern regimes are chronically deficient in them. See **Fats & Oils, [Deadly Harvest, Chapter 4](#)** [5], page 104.

In today's world, omega-3s are the good guys, being anti-inflammatory pumping out powerful hormones (eicosanoids) which do things like lower blood pressure, lower blood clotting, promote bone building and boost the immune system.

To my surprise, I have uncovered a well-kept secret: >4

Questions

Barley revisited

Q. www.oliveoilhunter.com claims health benefits for hulled (“whole”) barley saying that it is nutritious, good for gut health, and controls blood sugar. What do you make of it? After all, barley is an ancient grain.

A. Hold firmly in mind that barley is one of the Farming Revolution's 'original sins'. Even so, like in so many walks of life, good things can be found to say about something that is inherently unsatisfactory.

Basically, barley, along with wheat, rye, and other cereals, is not human food – chickens manage better.

Nevertheless, **COMPARED TO** other cereals and pearl (dehulled) barley, “whole” barley is less glycemic, is more nutritious, and has dietary fibers which encourage good gut bacteria [6].

So far, so good. But, **COMPARED TO** ‘good’ plant food (like salads, fruits, and colored vegetables), barley is still more glycemic, is empty calories, not alkalizing, and contains antinutrients of which gluten is the most notorious.

Just because it is an ‘ancient’ grain, of itself is no recommendation. It was a part of a revolution which led to a radical deterioration in human health. See: **The Problems with Eating Grains**, [Deadly Harvest, Chapter 3](#) [7] Page 52. See also Jared Diamond’s, “**Humanity’s worst mistake**” [8].



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Ethiopian woman grinding spelt

The new farmers suffered from multiple diseases, loss of stature, famine, and a life of unending drudgery. See: **Farming Double Edged sword**, [Dec 2005](#) [9]; **First Farmers: Women’s Bones**, [Feb](#)

[2018](#) [10]; **The Farming Revolution and its Consequences**, [Deadly Harvest, Chapter 2](#) [11].

Moreover, today’s ‘domesticated’ varieties of barley are more starchy and more glycemic than the ancient ‘wild’ varieties that wrought such havoc on the early farmers’ health [12].

But, oh yes, there is one good thing to say about barley – to make **BEER!** Indeed, this first alcoholic drink in the world might have sparked off farming in the first place! See [last month](#) [13]: **Beer – the farming revolution trigger?**

[I won’t be a party-pooper and observe that beer is glycemic and non-Paleo!]

News Shorts

Daylight-saving time change promotes poor lifestyle

Researchers explored whether the onset of daylight-saving time in the spring leads consumers to engage in unhealthy behaviors [14]. They found that after the clocks sprang forward an hour:

- a) calorie consumption from largely unhealthy snacks increases and,
- b) visits to fitness centers decrease.

The effect on calorie consumption is amplified during the evening hours and for cloudy days.

Further, visits to fitness centers are reduced among members who live farther away and who do not visit the fitness centers regularly.

On the other hand, there was no reversal in the fall when clocks went back.

“These results highlight the role of sleepiness caused by the one-hour setback, which impairs consumers’ self-control and leads to less healthy consumption behavior.”

My View? Regular readers will know that I fulminate against the changing of the clocks. Along with most health professionals and scientists, I argue that we should stick to just one time, preferably “standard” or astronomical time – just as our ancient ancestors did for a million years of evolution.

See: **Sleep Scientists Call to end Daylight Saving Time**, [Sept 2020](#)

[15] and all the previous articles on the subject that it refers to.

Krill oil for Knee Osteoarthritis?



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Krill? Krill are small shrimp-like creatures which are rich in the omega-3 fish oils, EPA and DHA, and the antioxidant “astaxanthin” [16], all of which have known anti-inflammatory effects.

Krill are reported to be the largest biomass in the world, with an estimated 300,000 million tons located in the Antarctic Ocean.

Now for an Australian study which investigated the effect of the intake of 2 grams per day of krill oil on people suffering ‘significant’ knee pain due to osteoarthritis [17]. It found that it didn’t help at all.

My view? I had two main criticisms: a) the dose of 2 grams per day is too low and,

b) the subjects’ intake of omega-6 oils – which are **INFLAMMATORY** – was not controlled at all! See **Omega-3 Index**, p 1.

Now I have a personal interest in this subject. A 1960s ski injury, which twisted my right knee, has matured into a mild case of osteoarthritis. I can still walk briskly 3 to 4 miles per day, but I have to avoid high impact activity.

But the idea that omega-3 fish oils, with their anti-inflammatory properties, **OUGHT TO** relieve knee stiffness and pain intrigued me.

So I doubled my intake of oily fish from one portion per day to two. Result? Relief within a couple of hours.

In contrast, whilst my intake of ‘bad’ omega-6 oils is normally low, eating 25 grams of cashew nuts (like most nuts, high in omega-6) aggravated symptoms.

That is not a scientific study, but I did discover studies that confirmed

this effect for cases of mild knee osteoarthritis of which this is one: [18].

Crucially it used **DOUBLE** the dose of krill oil: 4 grams per day. Even this is quite modest. American biochemist, Dr Barry Sears (he of *The Zone* diet) uses doses of 10 grams per day for pharmacological treatments, see:

Omega-3 Mega-doses Treat Eye Disorders, [Oct 2013](#) [19].

Olive oil beats dementia?

In a study of 92 383 adults observed over 28 years, the consumption of more than 7 grams per day of olive oil was associated with a 28% lower risk of dementia-related death compared with never or rarely consuming olive oil [20], irrespective of diet quality.

Opine the researchers, olive oil consumption may lower dementia mortality by improving the health of the lining (endothelium) of blood vessels, and by improving coagulation, fat metabolism, oxidative stress, platelet clumping, and by decreasing inflammation [21]

It also restores blood-brain barrier function, thereby slowing down the brain from clogging up with dementia-causing "amyloids" and "tau" clumps.

Finally, at the time of the study, margarine and mayonnaise contained considerable levels of hydrogenated trans-fats (now banned) which are strongly associated with death and dementia [22]. Replacing them with olive oil considerably reduced the risk of dementia.

My View? I've always been a bit suspicious of the mystique surrounding olive oil, but the evidence is piling up to support it.

Moreover, it is a monounsaturated omega-9 oil which is an innocent bystander in the battle between omega-3 and omega-6 (see **Omega-3 Index**, page 1).

So do use olive oil in the place of saturated fats and vegetable oils.

As for the study, it is a population study so, by nature, a little weak, but strengthened by the huge cohort and the length of time (28 years) over which it was observed.

Feedback

From Peter Harris, Melbourne, Australia.

Geoff I enjoyed this month's [June] newsletter. Why? Maybe because of all the practical day to day things like Listerine, alcohol, multivitamins, salt, etc.

Maybe the alcohol topic being close to home - I have too much on a Saturday night and have been trying to manage that.

But I think I liked the 'uncertainty' revealed and expressed within some of the topics, namely alcohol and Xylitol.

For example, with Xylitol - I think I liked that you're pausing / showing some caution based on the new evidence. Not to say that you don't / wouldn't with any topic, it probably just doesn't happen that often so it's noticeable.

And psychedelics is a challenging topic to tackle. Seems very complicated. You seem to be managing it.

My View? Thank you for your very constructive feedback, Peter. I do try to apply intellectual honesty in everything I write about. Sometimes the evidence changes and we have to revise our position.

Golf instructors say that the greatest challenge is the transition from the lesson on the driving range to the practical application on the golf course.

We have a similar challenge: the transition from our knowledge of life on the savanna to life in today's world. In particular finding foods that emulate those of our forager ancestors.

Mostly we seem to have got it worked out but, occasionally, new evidence arises to cast doubt on some of the options. Such is the case, as we saw [last month](#), with the "sugar alcohols" such as xylitol and erythritol. It seems that there is no easy option for painless sweetness!

On the other hand, sometimes, as with alcohol, evidence reinforces unwelcome conclusions – namely that we are not designed to handle large alcohol intakes. Your

resolution to restrict alcohol over-consumption to just Saturdays is laudable!

Thanks too, for your remarks about psychedelics. The topic is indeed complicated and I am condensing the essence of a vast body of recent knowledge into just a couple of thousand words.

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Psychedelics in Perspective (5)

Some authorities believe that the ubiquitous use of psychedelics was the glue which held societies together.

"Psilocybin would have enhanced the survival and reproductive success of our ancestors through improved stress-coping and managing social relationships.

"Psilocybin would improve how people process, store, and use information about other people (social cognition). It would multiply up the richness and complexity of social relationships and systems of communication." [23]

[Next month](#): Psychedelics in medication

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Beware misuse of "Paleo" designation

It went on to scare us by saying: "high-protein diets may cause a harmful excess of ammonium." This could overwhelm the liver causing "severe disorders, particularly neurological ones."

I had an email exchange with one of the study authors, Pierre Maechler, and I'm not convinced that his interpretation of 'Paleo' is well founded. He cited this reference [24] which is a pitifully weak secondary source.

However he did confirm that his 30% proportion of protein is measured by calories, not by weight – which is still high but not so extreme.

The truth is that the Paleolithic diet is moderate in protein content and fits very well with conventional medical wisdom. Its protein load is something the liver copes with perfectly. Naturally! Since evolution designed it that way. See: **Limits to**

Protein Intake, [June 2021](#) [25] and **Protein in Focus**, [Jan 2016](#) [26]

I worry that the use of the term “Paleo” has become so misunderstood and misused that its meaning has become debased and falsified.

See: **Beware the Bogus ‘Paleo’ Label**, [Oct 2016](#) [27].

Perhaps I should return to my original designation, “**The Savanna Model!**”

As for ‘high-protein’ diets there are others to choose from: “Carnivore”, “Caveman” and even “Ketogenic”. See **Ketogenic Diets Revisited**, [Jan 2024](#) [28].

We do not recommend them of course but some people, notably body-builders, mistakenly follow them. See: **High-protein Diet: Kidney failure**, [Jan 2014](#) [29]

Others use them to control food intolerances and allergies. The evolutionary psychiatrist, Dr Jordan Peterson, keeps a crippling autoimmune disease at bay allegedly by eating only fillet steak for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Presumably he

tops up with vitamin and micro-nutrient supplements. Even so, his liver (and kidneys) must be under great stress.

[Next month](#): a study on the benefits of a true Paleo diet [30]

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The Omega-3 Index

... the existence of a measure of “healthy” blood levels of omega-3s – the Omega-3 Index.

According to this study [31], published in 2010, the blood levels of the omega-3s EPA & DHA (also known as “fish-oils”) should be a minimum of 8% of total fatty acids.

This can be measured by a simple pin-prick of blood. In the US, most people are at 4% or below – the highest risk zone. This translates to a 90% higher risk of sudden cardiac death [32].

Note that omega-3 of vegetable origin, ALA ((alpha)linolenic acid) as found in hemp, flax, Canola [rapeseed], etc. does not count in the blood analysis.

This is because, to be of use, the body has first to convert ALA to DHA & EPA – which is what needs to be measured. See: **Omega-3s: Plant vs Fish** [June 2006](#) [33].

My View? This Omega-3 Index can be a useful measure of a healthy dietary lifestyle. However, I have a quibble. No account is made of the opposing oil, **OMEGA-6** (as found in oils of sunflower, safflower, corn [maize] etc) and which, by producing powerful hormones that do the opposite of omega-3 undoes all the good work of omega-3.

The balance with omega-3 is of the essence and, without that, the omega-3 index is only half useful – good to have high levels, but not enough if omega-6 is a lot higher.

The ideal is to measure blood levels of both oils. Then calculate the ratio between the two: it should be close to 1:1. We reported on supporter Diane Lewis’s stellar 1:1 ratio in: **Omega-3 to Omega-6 Blood ratio**, [April 2018](#) [34].

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

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