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AS WE SEE IT

Are Dietary Supplements Causing People To Live Longer?

New studies show that people are living longer and that a higher percentage of the elderly are living independently.

In 1982 for instance, 6.2% of the nation's elderly were confined to nursing homes, compared with only 3.4% in 1999. Another interesting statistic is that while there were nearly a third more elderly Americans in 1999 than in 1982, the total number of chronically disabled older Americans actually dropped.(1)

Researchers attribute this surge of healthy aging Americans to improved diet, exercise and better medical care. In fact, those who have chosen to live a healthier lifestyle are the ones attaining advanced age in a vigorous state.(2)

The critical fact that everyone ignores is that in 1982, only 2 billion dollars of dietary supplements were sold in the United States compared to 15.4 billion in 1999. Dietary supplement sales have surged seven-fold over the past two decades, but these numbers continue to be overlooked as a reason why so many Americans are avoiding aging-related disease.

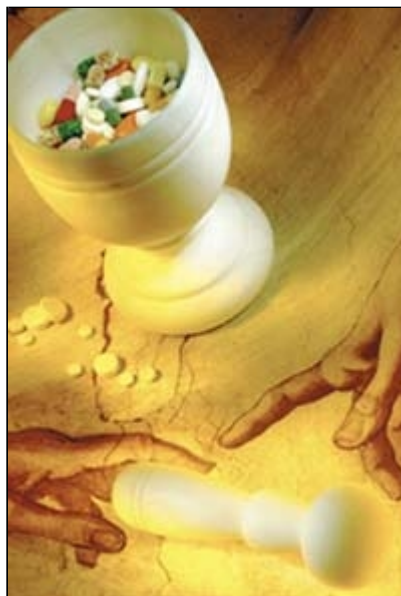
A report just released by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the number of Americans over age 85 jumped 38% from 1990 to 2000. The Census Bureau confirmed that the reason for this huge jump is the cumulative effect of reduction in disease risk as well as the increase in the average life expectancy. The Census Bureau reports that among senior citizens, the category of "oldest old" is increasing fastest of all, meaning that Americans are achieving a substantial increase in the human life span.(3)

These statistics should further motivate those seeking to avoid the catastrophes of aging to follow a healthy lifestyle. These reports document a substantial reward in the form of increased longevity and decreased disease risk for those who make the right choices.

Can we attribute these improvements in health and longevity to the sharply higher intake of dietary supplements? Not according to mainstream medicine, which is still waiting for the results of large-scale trials. Existing human studies, on the other hand, demonstrate a significant correlation between supplement use and increased life span.(4-7)



William Faloon





The FDA argues that if women ate more fortified foods, they would obtain enough folic acid. The facts are that most people won't change their diet, but many will consume a low-cost folic acid supplement.

Members of The Life Extension Foundation decided a long time ago to take matters into their own hands and consume supplements that have been shown in scientific studies to protect against disease, aging and death.

The folic acid controversy

We reported two months ago about a stunning defeat the FDA suffered in Federal Court when the agency tried to censor a health claim that folic acid supplements are more effective than food in preventing neural tube birth defects. The FDA filed a motion for the court to reconsider this ruling, but the FDA's motion was flatly rejected.

The FDA was thus under Court order to prepare a disclaimer to be put on dietary supplement labels if folic acid was promoted to prevent birth defects. Here is the disclaimer the FDA now requires on folic supplement labels that claim to prevent birth defects:

"FDA does not endorse this claim. Public health authorities recommend that women consume 0.4 mg of folic acid daily from fortified foods or dietary supplements or both to reduce the risk of neural tube defects."

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence in support of folic acid, the FDA displays its historical prejudice against dietary supplements by prefacing the Court-ordered statement with: "FDA does not endorse this claim."

Another government agency often at odds with the FDA is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the March 16, 2001 issue of their publication called Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, the CDC reminds women of reproductive age that they need to take at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily. According to this report, a survey of women of child-bearing age found that only 30% of women were aware that taking folic acid can prevent neural tube defects. Most of these women did not know that folic acid consumption on a regular basis is important to them.(8)

The CDC advocates that more information be disseminated to women of child bearing age about the importance of folic acid, while the FDA has gone to extraordinary lengths to suppress the truth about this critically important B-vitamin.

The result of FDA censorship of folic acid supplements is that more babies will be born with horrendous birth defects such as spina bifida and other related neural tube defects. The FDA argues that if women ate more fortified foods, they would obtain enough folic acid. The facts are that most people won't change their diet, but many will consume a low-cost folic acid supplement.

For women to know to take folic acid, the FDA has to let supplement makers advertise that folic acid can reduce the risk of certain kinds of birth defects.

FDA Drops Threatened Appeal of Folic Acid Decision

The FDA made it clear that it did not agree with the Court's decision permitting a health claim to be made about the superiority of folic acid supplements (compared to food) in preventing birth defects.

because the claim is contrary to the weight of the scientific evidence."

After threatening to file an appeal of the Court's decision that allowed the folic acid health claim, the FDA just announced it would not contest this issue further. After eight years of intensive litigation over this one

The FDA is now under Court-order to allow a claim that folic acid supplements are more effective than folic acid obtained from food.

It cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees and took eight years to force the FDA to recognize this one health claim. If the FDA continues this pattern of censoring scientifically-based health claims, most Americans will not learn what they can do to reduce disease risk.

Few people read medical journals. That means that if more Americans are to take advantage of the evolving knowledge about disease prevention, supplement companies must be allowed to advertise truthful, non-misleading health claims to the public. FDA censorship equals death to the uninformed.

As a subscriber to this publication, you are updated every month about the latest scientific methods of preventing disease via the use of diet, hormones, drugs and supplements.

For longer life,



William Faloon

In an April 3, 2001 letter to the victors of the folic acid First Amendment lawsuit, the FDA threatened enforcement action if the label typeface of the disclaimer was not the same as the health claim about folic acid's benefits. The FDA went on to state:

"FDA believes that no disclaimer can remedy the deceptiveness of your health claim

narrow health claim, the FDA has finally capitulated on this fundamental First Amendment issue.



FDA To Be Sued On Antioxidant-Cancer Claim

Attorney Jonathan Emord announced on June 4, 2001 that a new lawsuit will be filed against the FDA based on their denial of a health claim that antioxidant vitamins may prevent cancer. The FDA denied this claim based on their interpretation of studies indicating that antioxidants don't cure cancer. The health claim that's being sought, however, seeks only to convey the message that reducing free radical damage may prevent cancer at the initiation stage. The FDA does not appear capable of differentiating between preventing and curing cancer.

Supporting anti-FDA litigation

Only a handful of people are paying the legal costs of battling the FDA's attempt to deny the public access to truthful, non-misleading scientific information. The First Amendment victories over the FDA to date have been remarkable, but the FDA continues to squander tax dollars in an effort to protect the drug companies against low-cost dietary supplements. You can help support litigation being spearheaded by Durk Pearson, Sandy Shaw, Julian Whitaker and others by sending a donation to:

Pearson and Shaw Litigation Fund
Emord and Associates
5282 Lyngate Court
Burke, VA 22015

All of the legal briefs filed for Durk and Sandy by Jonathan Emord and Associates can be found at www.emord.com.

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