

All things medical

The China study

In this month's *The American Journal of Cardiology*, an article appeared about China not adopting the same guidelines we use in America to treat high cholesterol. Paralleling the recent affluence in China, there has been a concomitant increase of cardiovascular disease. Their recommendation is that the treatment of high cholesterol should be initiated at a lower level than in America to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

Dr. T. Colin Campbell, a professor of nutritional biochemistry at Cornell University, who authored a recent bestseller book and has written more than 300 research papers, was the prime American researcher in another Chinese study. This involved 2400 counties with 880 million of their citizens surveyed. Statistics on 367 disease variabilities were reviewed in 65 counties with urine and blood studies, along with a three-day direct measurement of food samples. The counties selected were in rural to semi-rural parts of China, where 92 percent of adults in each county still lived in the same area where they were born. The study concluded that it is what we eat rather than the genetic background that causes disease. Ninety-seven percent of disease was acquired from the food they ate, rather from what they inherited, since the people surveyed were from the genetically identical Han descendants.

For the last 50 years, doctors gave the right advice for the wrong reason. Meat

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and dairy are harmful for the cardiovascular system. We had thought it was the saturated fat and cholesterol in these products that were dangerous to our health.

From Dr. Campbell's study, we now know it is not the fat, but the meat and dairy protein that causes the problem. The statistical increase of disease in those Chinese who did consume much meat and dairy products was directly related to their high intake of animal protein rather than the fat. American studies show that saturated fat, to include the consumption of lard, but not the hydrogenated (trans) plant fat, such as Crisco, is more beneficial than eating meat and dairy protein. Avoidance of meat and milk products will give better health. The Paleolithic diet, which is high in protein and low in carbohydrates and fat, that I wrote about 18 months ago is wrong. The fuel that we consume and the building blocks of our body is from the four macronutrients: fats, carbs, protein and alcohol is important, but it is the micronutrients within the whole foods that lead to health.