

A Guide to Longevity and Self-Healing

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Abstract: The object of this local study was to test the knowledge of local people from Ban Nong Waeng, Tambon Wang Nang, Amphur Muang, Mahasarakham Province in the benefits of everyday food and to use local resources for self-healing.

Methodology: The study employed a various methodology of 1. Planning. 2. Research. 3. Reflection. The study employed 30 volunteers from the local community to attend an in depth interview. Each person was asked a selection of questions on their knowledge of the individual health benefits of everyday consumption of various local grown fruits and vegetables, e.g. their vitamin content, how could they prevent or alleviate certain ailments, are the seeds or leaves of any particular benefit, questions on home remedies and concoctions to alleviate and cure symptoms of various ailments and knowledge of what causes life threatening diseases.

Results: The results of this research were as follows 1. All persons interviewed new that everyday fruits and vegetables were good for your body. 2. They did not know the individual benefits or the vitamins particular produce contained. 3. Home remedies and concoctions produced at home seemed to have been lost or not passed down from generation to generation, 80% of the local volunteers believed smoking and alcohol was the cause of cancers and other life threatening diseases and 20% believed the onset of these life threatening ailments are initiated by bad living and sin against others. Some residents mentioned that the fruit from the Pak a dow (Isaan) Sa dow (Thailand) tree had benefits that might be a preventative measure against cancer but after some research it was found that the leaf and fruit extract was used predominantly used as relief from Leprosy and skin complaints, it also helped in some stomach and intestinal tract complaints, its other names are the Neem or Nimtree and grows predominantly in Asia. Research has been going on for the past thirty years into this leaf and seed extract as its efficiency as a non chemical insecticide and results are promising.

Conclusion: The conclusion to this study was there is a real need to educate local people into the benefits and vitamins of individual fruits and vegetables, the ability to use these to prevent the onset of illnesses, the knowledge of free radicals and their outcome, the preparation of self-healing concoctions lost over the years. This knowledge could alleviate an already over loaded health system especially the knowledge to prevent the onset of life threatening ailments and to raise your self-esteem with the knowledge to improve you and your family's life style and wellbeing.

Keywords: self-healing, fruits and vegetables, home remedies and concoctions.

1. INTRODUCTION

This research came about when local people took an interest in the concoctions that I and my wife were drinking or eating on a regular basis. Peoples curiosity is what led me to conduct this survey because when people inquired to what we were eating and drinking, when told what the concoctions were and what they did for your body people often looked perplexed and it was this that made me realize a lack of this knowledge was prevalent in our local society and needed to be addressed so everyone would attain the knowledge of these lost or forgotten cures and remedies and start to selfheal ailments and reduce the intake of modern day chemical alternatives.

We all know that fruit and vegetables are good for us and should be part of a healthy diet. What we don't always know is their specific benefits. Fruit and vegetables can cure or prevent us from suffering from various diseases and ailments. There are also herbal teas, drinks and potions that can be produced at home to prevent, cure or alleviate diseases and symptoms.

High blood pressure or hypertension is often referred to as the silent killer. Why? Because unless detected through normal medical checks, this ailment has no specific signs to warn you of the outcome. High blood pressure causes fractures in the small blood vessels of the brain to start, it then leads onto fractures of the major blood vessels in the brain that may cause a stroke.

Plaque (fatty deposits cholesterol) caused by incorrect diets, lifestyles and habits. For instance, foods high in cholesterol, obesity and smoking.

Cancer, some cancers have very little symptoms, till curing the disease becomes very difficult. The chances of suffering with cancer can be increased by bad lifestyles and habits. For instance being exposed to carcinogenic materials, this can occur at the work place where incorrect or insufficient safety equipment is available, smoking and drinking excessively and unhealthy diets. Susceptibility to cancer can sometimes be hereditary; this is an ongoing study by various institutes and includes colon, breast, prostate, skin cancer and leukemia.

The three leading causes of death in Thailand are cancer, ischemic heart disease and strokes- cancer 19% ischemic heart disease 12% strokes 10%.¹

These diseases can be reduced with the knowledge and awareness of their causes and how to lower the risk by eating correctly prepared foods and taking home remedies that can treat their cause, prevent their onset and better manage the disease for some patients.

Foods such as broccoli has for years been claimed as a super food in the fight against cancer, data gathered on samples taken prove that it contains sulforaphane, which researches believe gives broccoli it's particular cancer fighting properties. It appears that broccoli has necessary ingredients to switch ON genes that prevent cancer production and switch OFF other ones that help it spread.

High consumption of cruciferous vegetables is associated with a lower risk of prostate cancer in epidemiological studies, although the precise constituents that may mediate this observation are unknown². Sulforaphane a derivative of glucoraphanin found in crucifers has heterogeneous biological activities including phase 2 enzyme induction, cell arrest and apoptosis, but data pathways that mediate effects on cell growth, survival and differentiation are incomplete. Of note several reports show that sulforaphane treatment on prostate cancer cells in vitro leads to reduced prostate cancer cell survival, and treatment of xenograft implants, transgenic animal models of prostate cancer with sulforaphane inhibits tumor formation and metastases³.

2. AWARENESS

Cancer develops when cancer cells come together to form a group. They come together for many reasons and understanding these reasons are the first steps to prevention and management of the disease(s). Awareness may also assist in the prevention or onset of heart disease and strokes.

Having some knowledge of about the role that vitamins and minerals have in the prevention and the role free radicals play in the onset can be very useful to the patient.

Free radicals are atoms or groups of atoms with an odd (unpaired) number of electrons and can be formed when oxygen interacts with certain molecules.

Once formed these highly reactive radicals can start a chain reaction similar to '*The domino effect*'. Danger comes from the damage they can do when they react with important cellular components such as DNA, or the cell membrane. Cells may function poorly or even die if this occurs. This is why antioxidants are so important to having a healthy body and overall wellbeing.

Antioxidants are the body's defense system to prevent free radical damage. Antioxidants react safely with free radicals terminating this chain reaction. The principle micronutrients (vitamins) of antioxidants that scavenge free radicals are vitamin E; beta-carotene and vitamin C. selenium, a trace metal that is required for proper function of one of the body's antioxidant enzyme systems can be included in this category. The body does not produce these micronutrients so they must come from our diet or supplements.

There are 2 types of strokes: ischemic; which is similar to a heart attack, where a blot clot is formed either in the brain or is formed elsewhere and travels to the brain. These blood clots block blood flow to the brain's cells. Ischemic strokes can

also occur when too much plaque (fatty deposits and cholesterol builds up in the blood vessels) clogging the brain's vessels, 80% of strokes are ischemic. Hemorrhagic strokes are the fracture(s) of blood vessels in the brain caused by high blood pressure or an aneurysm, which is a weak wall of the artery causing it to fracture (this is also a side effect of high steroid use).

3. SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE

Numbness in the face, arm, or leg on one side of the body.

Impaired or loss of vision.

Sudden, severe headache for no reason.

Loss or impaired walking ability.

Inability to speak fluently.

A simple three part test that only takes a minute and is easy enough for a child to carry out, it's called the "Cincinnati Pre-Hospital Stroke Scale" and comprises of:

1. The smile test, patients are asked show me your teeth, this is to check for one sided facial weakness..
2. Patients are then asked to close their eyes and raise both their arms above your head. Stroke patients usually cannot raise both arms to the same height, a sign of arm weakness.
3. Speech test, patients are asked to repeat a simple sentence to check for speech slurring.

These are all classic signs of an impending stroke

A stroke is a medical emergency and the emergency services (ambulance, paramedic) should be called immediately, early medical treatment may save your life or increase your chances of a full recovery.

Ischemic heart disease and heart attacks occur when blood clots in the heart vessels or elsewhere in the body and travel to the heart. Heart attacks also occur when the heart blood vessels become blocked with plaque (fatty deposits and cholesterol build up).

4. METHOD AND MATERIALS

Interviews were conducted with local people aged between 40/65 years of age.

The questions asked were as follows:

1. Do you know what attributes to the onset of cancer?
2. Do you know what attributes to the onset of heart disease?
3. Do you know what attributes to the onset of strokes?
4. Could you recognize the early signs of strokes and heart disease (attack)?
5. What are the measures that need to be taken and important timescales?
6. What knowledge do you have on healthy lifestyles?
7. What home remedies do you know of that can cure or alleviate symptoms.
8. Knowledge of individual benefits of fruit and vegetables.
9. Could anyone remember as a child the older generation making or drinking homemade remedies?
10. Would they consider these health giving tips and indeed use them?

The antidotal statistics⁴ generated were interesting. Whilst the group was generally aware of the benefits of good nutrition, they were mostly unaware of the particular benefits of individual fruits and vegetables and also lacked knowledge on the production of homemade remedies such as teas, supplements and potions and their particular benefits to ailments. The old tradition of handing down aged old remedies through the generations was not being achieved.

Searches were conducted on the internet about free radicals and their links to cancer, diets that aid in the prevention of the onset of these diseases, individual benefits of selected fruits, vegetables and the production of home remedies (supplements) to prevent or alleviate the symptoms of these diseases.

Websites⁵ were researched to gather information on vitamin contents and the individual benefits of fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains and supplements to form the views expressed in this paper.

Laboratory studies have shown dandelion to have anticancer properties, but clinical studies have not shown this effect in humans. Dandelion Root extract has anticancer effects against melanoma, leukemia, pancreatic cancer, and colorectal cancer cell lines. However, human studies are limited. [2]

Researchers from Windsor Regional Cancer Centre in Canada announced in February 2015 that approval and funding for human clinical trials on dandelion's anti-cancer potential had been received. The researchers are testing a potent form of Dandelion Root extract on a group of 30 patients with end-stage, blood-related cancers.

The University of Maryland Medical Center has also noted that the dandelion flower, in particular, possesses strong antioxidant properties which are helpful in averting cancer. Earlier research by Dr. Siyaram Pandey from the University of Windsor further illustrates the anti-cancer potential of dandelion. In otherwise untreatable pancreatic cancer (which is said to have close to a 100 percent mortality rate), Dandelion Root extract was found to induce programmed cell death, also known as apoptosis, in pancreatic cancer cells. It also killed leukemia and melanoma cancer cells in lab mice. Dandelion Root extract similarly induced autophagy, a process by which the body maintains homeostasis through the proper elimination of damaged or malignant cells. [1]

“BxPC-3 and PANC-1 pancreatic cells were sensitive to aqueous DRE (Dandelion Root extract). This extract induces selective apoptosis in a dose- and time-dependent manner. Dandelion Root extract caused the collapse of the mitochondrial membrane potential, leading to prodeath autophagy. Normal human fibroblasts were resistant at similar doses,” the study stated.

“We demonstrated that DRE has the potential to induce apoptosis and autophagy in human pancreatic cancer cells with no significant effect on noncancerous cells. This will provide a basis on which further research in cancer treatment through DRE can be executed.”⁶

Many authors draw the line between the use of illicit drugs, environmental chemicals, the over use of alcohol and tobacco as links to cancer. Other researchers believe there is a link between a poor diet and general nutrition and heart disease. Still other research has been carried out into antioxidants and free radicals by rice University, The National human Genome Research Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. There are numerous websites on the internet that offer well researched information about the individual benefits of fruit and vegetables their vitamin type/count, as either a cure or prevention in the three types of diseases. Still other websites are devoted to showing how diet and supplements have the ability to alleviate certain (particular) symptoms of cancer, ischemic heart disease and stroke.

5. RESULTS

The antidotal statistics⁴ generated were interesting. Whilst the group was generally aware of the benefits of good nutrition, they were mostly unaware of the particular benefits of individual fruits and vegetables and also lacked knowledge on the production of homemade remedies such as teas, supplements and potions and their particular benefits to ailments. The old tradition of handing down aged old remedies through the generations was not being achieved.

The results in general were of a below average percentage, increasing the risk of these diseases 26%. Causes of these diseases 12%, prevention of these diseases 24%. And home remedies to alleviate symptoms or cure these diseases 5%, all of the recipients had experience of losing friends or family to at least one of these diseases and some idea of what can increase you risk of or prevent these diseases, for instance smoking, alcohol abuse and obesity. Some residents mentioned that the fruit from the Pak a dow (Isaan) Sa dow (Thailand) tree had benefits that might be a preventative measure against cancer but after some research it was found that the leaf and fruit extract was used predominantly used as relief from Leprosy and skin complaints, it also helped in some stomach and intestinal tract complaints, its other names are the Neem or Nimtree and grows predominantly in Asia. Research has been going on for the past thirty years into this leaf and seed extract as its efficiency as a non-chemical insecticide and results are promising. This is good news as the use of chemical insecticides in rural areas are on the increase but comes with a lack of knowledge as to their side effects on the user not wearing the correct protective clothing and people have experienced the ill effects and even death as a result of this lack of knowledge, the chemical companies seem more interested in selling the product rather than educating the farmers in the correct use.

6. DISCUSSION

One of the goals of this paper was to gather data on people's perception of these three diseases and be able to increase their knowledge in the prevention, cure and alleviation of symptoms by simple life style changes and home remedies and supplements.

7. CONCLUSION

A programme to heighten people's awareness to cancer, heart disease and stroke will benefit the community as a whole. With this new awareness a keenness to alter lifestyles and knowledge of prevention through correct diets and concoctions produced at home from simple local materials, will over time lessen the load on an already over loaded health system. After the correct research has been achieved a plan to make several small pamphlets containing information on the causes, the prevention and the cure for these diseases, as well as knowledge of the specific benefits of various localized fruit and vegetables with recipes for concoctions are to be distributed around the rural hospital for the locals to benefit from.

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