

Still Going Against The Grain: Death In The Pot!

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What, another “grain-alarm” diet book? Yes, and much more. Like Elisha’s prophets, we are distressed to discover “there is death in the pot” (II Kings 4:40). Dr. Davis, in *Wheat Belly*, has denounced modern Wheat (untested for safety) as contributing to high rates of obesity, diabetes, cancer, arthritis, osteoporosis, acne and heart attacks. Dr. Perlmutter’s *Grain Brain* (2013) warns that modern, engineered Wheat and Gluten actually *attack the brain* in children. He is also aghast at findings linking Type II Diabetes with Alzheimer’s (Type III Diabetes). “We all know that poor diet can lead to obesity and diabetes, but a busted brain?” (p. 26).

“But, my brain is OK!” *Oh, really?* Dr. Perlmutter observes, that “40 percent of us can’t properly process gluten, and the remaining 60 percent could be in harm’s way. The question we need to be asking ourselves: *What if we’re all sensitive to gluten from the perspective of the brain?*” (p. 32). He notes, “[*Your brain may even now*] be enduring assaults at a molecular level without your feeling it. Unless you’re nursing a headache ... it can be hard to know what’s going on in the brain until it’s too late” (p. 33). He even provides handy true-false “Self-Assessment” to determine your risk “for serious [*preventable*] neurological ailments” (p. 17).

Dr. Perlmutter brings more than expertise as a certified neurologist and Fellow in holistic medicine to the table. His 35 year quest to understand and fight against brain disease is very personal. He shares the pain of families whose kin are prey to Alzheimer’s. “It’s heart-wrenching for me as well. Each morning before I start my day, I visit my ninety-six year-old father. A former brilliant neurosurgeon ... [Perlmutter’s father] now resides in an assisted-living facility ... [He] may not remember my name, [but] he almost never forgets to tell me to make sure I make rounds on each of his patients. He retired more than twenty-five years ago” (p. 9).

In Part I, *Grain Brain* discusses metabolic problems at a cellular level triggered by high levels of blood sugar (glucose), from consumption of high-carb foods. These, lead to development of insulin resistance and ultimately to Type II Diabetes. Perlmutter further reports, “New estimates indicate that Alzheimer’s will likely affect 100 million people by 2050, a crippling number for our health care system and one that will dwarf our obesity epidemic. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes, which accounts for 90 to 95 percent of all diabetes cases in the United States, has tripled in the past forty years. ... And in the next forty years, more than 115 million new cases of Alzheimer’s are expected globally, costing us more than one trillion dollars (in today’s dollars)” (p. 31).

Perlmutter insists, “There is little doubt that one of the largest and most wide-reaching events in the ultimate decline of brain health in modern society has been the introduction of wheat grain into the human diet” (p. 8). We are informed that, “the 133 pounds of wheat that the average American consumes each year shares almost no genetic, structural, or chemical likeness” to einkorn wheat our ancestors ate. Perlmutter outs Gluten as, “a ‘silent germ.’ It can inflict lasting [brain] damage without your knowing it” (p. 8).

The doctor then reports science has long known dementia and brain disease are associated with cerebral shrinkage. But discovery “that such shrinkage can happen as a result of blood sugar spikes in the ‘normal’ range has tremendous implications for anyone who eats blood sugar-boosting foods [high in carbs]” (p. 35). Research links “obesity, vascular disease, and inflammation to cognitive decline ... For every excess pound put on the body, the brain gets a little smaller” (p. 121). *Wow!* This is really heavy stuff.

We are urged to free ourselves from misleading nutrition myths. “The two biggest ones: (1) a low-fat, high-carb diet is good, and (2) cholesterol is bad.” (p. 33). These myths have prevailed since the 1977 U.S. Senate endorsement of a flawed study of the “lipid hypothesis,” (discussed in Chapter 3, pp. 81-84). Then a multi billion dollar market in statin drugs erupted with horrible side-effects.

Dr. Perlmutter proceeds to explode the cholesterol-is-bad myth. “As we’ve seen, science is only recently discovering that both fat and cholesterol are severely deficient in diseased brains and that high total cholesterol levels in late life are associated with increased longevity [at odds with the ‘lipid hypothesis’]. The brain holds only 2 percent of the body’s mass but contains 25 percent of the total cholesterol, which supports brain function and development. One-fifth of the brain by weight is cholesterol!” (p. 91).

He next cites a 2012 FDA report that statin drugs can “cause cognitive side effects such as memory lapses and confusion. ... [The 2012 study of] the American Medical Association ... demonstrated an astounding 48 percent increased risk of diabetes among women taking statin medications” (p. 94). Sadly, statin drugs remain as an unwarranted tax upon a family’s fiscal and physical health.

Dr. Perlmutter’s prescription is straightforward common sense. Moms and Dads must remove “death-in-the-pot” modern wheat from family diets ASAP. We have no easy fix from Elisha to be rid of harmful Wheat and Gluten. But we *do have* Perlmutter’s four-week “make-over” changes in diet, exercise and sleep needed for “Grain Brain Rehab” (p. 179). In place of bread we’ll have “meat, cheese, and eggs, [and] ... an abundance of wonderfully healthful vegetables” (p. 36). “What’s more, you’ll learn how to grow new brain cells; I’m going to show you how and why neurogenesis – the birth of new brain cells – is under your control” (p. 41).

Going Against The Grain is often uncomfortable and inconvenient. But we must take the time and pay the price for real food for our children and loved ones. Perlmutter’s “Grain Brain Rehab” protocol offers guidelines by which “we can naturally prevent, treat, and sometimes cure – without drugs – a spectrum of brain-based ailments such as ADHD, depression, anxiety, insomnia, autism, Tourette’s syndrome, headaches, and Alzheimer’s disease” (p. 42). To succumb to “gourmet-fast-food” temptation is to follow the health-challenged crowd, “Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly” (Philippians 3:19). Lord, grant us perseverance!