



Integrative Healthcare

Spring 2015

Moods, Hormones, and Health Choices

Can You Use Hormones for Disease Prevention? .. and the Grandmother Theory

First, a bit about hormones: Hormones are body chemicals that control cellular functions at a distance. These systems are complex and interact with each other. The systems include the sex hormones, thyroid and adrenals along with blood sugar balance and gut-related hormones. Imbalance in one system tends to cause trouble in the other areas. Hormones change or "aromatize" into other hormones based on many factors. So if hormones are beneficial, why does nature make them run out?

The grandmother theory: most animals continue to reproduce as long as they live, but human women lose their fertility in their 40's and live decades more... why? Since human children take so long to raise, and are so much work, some speculate that older women are more valuable to the family in helping raise their grandchildren than in having more babies. Nature stops the hormones to arrange more help for kids but this allows more degenerative changes in grandma.. (but maybe we can have our cake and eat it too).

(what hormone treatments are there?)

The "sex" hormones have dozens of functions. Along with controlling sperm production in men and the release of the egg and menstrual cycle in women, they also influence moods & emotions, buffer inflammation and

boost bone and skin integrity. They can help prevent and treat degenerative conditions, arteriosclerosis, memory loss, bone loss, and help inflammatory conditions... under the right circumstances.

Estradiol is effective for women with menopausal symptoms including; flushing, sweats, anxiety, mood problems, brain fog and insomnia. Women taking estrogen also need progesterone to protect against uterine (endometrial) cancer, plus it helps sleep and anxiety. Testosterone certainly boosts libido... But can we safely use hormones to treat problems of aging and prevent disease? What does the research show? The large hormone study, the "Women's Health Initiative" in the US was conducted using only the artificial progesterone or "progestins" and equine type estrogens (Premarin). These are not bio-identical i.e. not chemically identical to human estrogens - and do not act the same in the body as estradiol, testosterone and progesterone.

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Integrative Healthcare will host the Daniel Plan series, on Monday evenings in May and June - presented by my friend,

Jane Springer. This is a Christian-oriented plan that utilizes the Functional Medicine approach.

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Increased risk of cancer risk and heart disease with these artificial hormones has been shown in numerous studies. However, a large French study (over 44,000 women) showed no increase in cancer or heart disease risk with bio-identical hormones. Summing up the research, bio-identical hormones are dramatically different. It is clear that the natural form of estradiol is an excellent therapy for: 1) osteoporosis treatment in women after menopause (over 8% improvement, vitamin D and K2 also recommended), 2) it lowers harmful forms of cholesterol (LDL and Lp(a)) and raises HDL, lowering heart risk, 3) it raises BDNF which encourages growth and health of neurons and helps health of the hippocampus, center of memory. Testosterone in women also helps bone strength, along with estrogen and the combination also increases joint repair.

A few tips to using hormones: Balance is Key!— hormone levels should be monitored and adjusted for both women and men when using Bio-identical hormones. Since they are the natu-

ral type of hormones, they can be measured in blood by standard lab tests and the aim should generally be closer to young-normal hormone levels. Creams and troches (sublingual) are fine but pellets give more even and controlled blood levels. Pellets are about the size of a grain of rice, injected in the hip area and last 3 1/2 months for women and 6 months for men.

Hormone therapy can be an aid to lifestyle change - helping mood, motivation and energy, and also add to the effects of healthy lifestyle which should always be a major focus.

But you can still help care for your grandchildren!!

Attack of the Alien Xenoestrogens!

Did you know that just by drinking from plastic bottles you get enough “xenoestrogens” to cause hormonal symptoms in many women? These xenoestrogens - estrogen-like toxins from plastics- have some actions of estrogen but not all. BPA is one of these plastics that have estrogen action, though there are many others.

Xenoestrogens are hard for the body to break down and eliminate and cause a strong and unhealthy type of estrogen-like action. Better to avoid plastic bottles, use a water filter and fill your own glass, or at least

BPA-free plastic container. Also hand wash all plastic food containers. Don't heat food in them in the microwave - heat causes plastic to break down a little and exude more chemicals.



Be a “Prepper”

Are you worried about food and water supply in an emergency? Some “prepper” activities that makes sense for your health — growing fruits and vegetables! Gardening is good exercise, good for stress, mentally stimulating (it can be a challenge!) and great for nutrition. You might start with just a few large flower pots of peppers and tomatoes or put a few veggies in your flower beds.

Rain barrels are large barrels made to gather water from a building

roof via gutters and downspouts. They help prevent flooding, save water you can use on your yard and garden. Rain barrels can make a good emergency water supply (don't drink it unless it's boiled or treated though!). The city sells 55 gallon rain barrels and has the faucet at the bottom and screen to keep out mosquitos. A friend has 12 rain barrels she made from large trash cans!



Freedom of Choice is Written in Our DNA

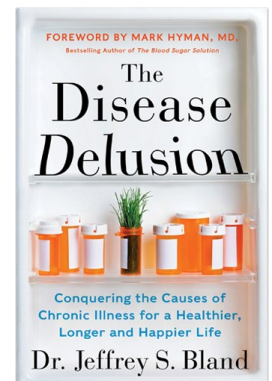
Remember “junk DNA?” Several years ago we were told that our DNA contains a very large amount of non-functional “junk” information - perhaps just an accumulation of errors or genes picked up from bacteria. When the human genome project started, scientists thought that the human genome would be the most complex of the animal world. Both of these ideas turned out to be wrong! Our human genome is actually smaller (25,000 genes) and less complex than many others, including the grape plant! It is unique in one way though— it has more of this “junk DNA” than any other organism on the planet... more than half of our total genome!

What this type of DNA, now known as “promoter regions”, controls is “epigenetic” expression. Epigenetics changes the way genes are expressed - muffling some genes and activating others - in response to many factors. These include many environmental factors including chemicals in food, lack of certain vitamins, and chronic stress. Since stress

is generated by our thoughts, our mental states effect our genes! This system of epigenetics makes humans some of the most adaptable creatures on Earth. Human and chimpanzee DNA is very similar and geneticists have compared the two, trying to account for the large difference in our two species.

Apparently the main difference is the amount of epigenetic DNA. In other words, humans are much more able to adapt to various environments, both physically and socially. We are not hardwired for disease, but can change the expression though changes in diet, activity, use of supplements and change in attitudes. It seems to me that this also means we have more freedom of choice than any other animals.

A source for this article is *The Disease Delusion* by Dr. Jeffrey Bland, a highly recommended book that explains functional medicine.



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Evening Class on The Daniel Plan – 40 Days to a Healthier Life

Do you want to adopt a healthier lifestyle, but can't seem to get started? *The Daniel Plan* is a biblically-based program created by Rick Warren, author of *A Purpose Driven Life* that can help you jump-start your journey to health and wellness with the support of community.

The book was co-authored by two well-respected physicians, Mark Hyman, M.D. (president of the Institute for Functional Medicine) and Daniel Amen, M.D. (renowned brain scientist) and has five key components – Faith, Food, Fitness, Focus and Friends. You will need to read the book, “The Daniel Plan” and have the Study Guide for the class. The Daniel Plan Journal would also be extremely

helpful day-to-day. All can be purchased on Amazon.com or at www.thedanielplan.com. This six-week class will begin Monday, May 11, 2015 for 6 weeks, skipping Memorial Day. The fee is \$25 for the whole series, which includes some cooking sessions.

The classes will be facilitated by Jane Springer, Certified Life and Wellness Coach who was inspired to help others when she recovered from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome using healthy lifestyle changes. Jane is retired from the Florida Department of Health. In addition to her wellness coaching practice, she is a research assistant at Florida State University.

