Holistic Approach to Syndrome X
review by Katherine Duff

Nutritional Factors for Syndrome X
by Stephen Holt, MD, Jonathan V. Wright, MD, T.V. Taylor, MD and Fraser G.S. Holt
Wellness Publishing, 105 Lock Street, Suite 405, Enterprise Development Center, NJIT, Newark, New Jersey 07103 USA

Most people may not have even heard of it, but Syndrome X affects up to 70 million Americans and accounts for the leading causes of death and disability in this country. As a metabolic syndrome it does not have widespread recognition, which the authors of Nutritional Factors for Syndrome X hope to change. The authors are an impressive group that includes Stephen Holt, MD, Jonathan Wright, MD, T.V. Taylor, MD and Fraser Holt. Their goal in this book is to first of all, put an end to the complacency surrounding this important risk to health, and then to offer a plan to combat Syndrome X through changes in lifestyle and nutritional approaches.

As defined in this book, Syndrome X is caused by a disturbance in body chemistry that arises from inherited tendencies, lack of exercise and too much refined sugar. The indicators of this syndrome include symptoms such as high blood pressure, obesity and high blood cholesterol. At the root of all these problems is resistance to the hormone insulin.

Insulin resistance occurs when the body does not respond properly to insulin. When this happens blood levels of insulin are elevated while the pancreas secretes even more insulin. Excessive circulating insulin tends to increase fat storage, cholesterol production and blood pressure. What follows is a chain of events that cause metabolic disturbances resulting in damage to blood vessels. It is easy to see then why the diseases that result from Syndrome X include heart attack, stroke and vascular diseases, which are the leading causes of death and disability in this country. Syndrome X is also considered a forerunner to Type II, adult onset diabetes.

Treatment for Syndrome X is to address all four of the risk factors rather than each individually, preferably with natural remedies. Obesity must be addressed with weight loss, high blood pressure must be reduced, high cholesterol must be reduced and blunting of surges in blood glucose must be accomplished. For this, they warn against self-treatment and advise the reader to seek the assistance of a knowledgeable physician. They do though, offer practical strategies for developing a healthier lifestyle with more exercise, diet and appropriate supplements.

The discussion of diet stresses that there is no one diet recommendation for everyone, but in general the goal is to limit calories, reduce carbohydrates and limit intake of simple sugars. The authors critique several popular diets and settle on a modified Atkins Diet as their preference.

Figuring prominently in diet consideration is the concept of the Glycemic Index, which refers to the ability of certain foods to raise the level of blood sugar. One factor that can affect sugar absorption is the rate at which the stomach empties. Food choices that include soluble fiber and supplements can slow this rate and subsequently blunt surges in blood sugar.

The supplements discussed in the book are considered "first-line options" for smoothing out blood glucose levels and reducing spikes of insulin. Among those recommended are a properly balanced ratio of omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acids, CoEnzyme Q10, chromium, vanadium and several antioxidants.

This book ends with each of the doctors contributing a chapter with their opinions concerning Syndrome X. Common to these essays is the understanding that Syndrome X represents a new pandemic – as evidenced by the increasing number of overweight adults and children developing diabetes. Rather than turning to pharmaceuticals as the first option for each of the symptoms, this small book offers natural strategies that may prevent or correct many of our most debilitating illnesses.

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Book Notice

Lyme Disease Update: Science Policy & Law

The peer reviewed science behind chronic Lyme disease in a concise format, along with the steps that have been taken by activists and governments across the country who are fighting the war against the most prevalent vector-borne disease in this country today – Lyme disease by Marcus Cohen, Columnist, Townsend Letter for Doctors & Patients.

Available now on www.LymeDiseaseAssociation.org or send name and address and $10.00 check/money order payable to: Lyme Disease Association, P.O. Box 1438, Jackson, New Jersey 08527 USA.

"This valuable document – Lyme Disease Update – reflects the passionate commitment of the Lyme Disease Association to educate others about Lyme disease. Carefully referenced and written by Marcus Cohen in a style that is accessible to both the medical profession and the educated non-medical person, this document provides overviews and digests of important research findings from the last few decades...providing the reader with an opportunity to learn about some of the pivotal studies in Lyme disease and about areas of research that need to be more aggressively pursued." Brian A Fallon, MD, Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, from Foreword to the Update.

"As a writer of both novels and fiction, I know the power of the written word on a page. It can turn hearts, open eyes, and change lives. A story is a means to see the world from a new and higher perch. And this book does exactly that. It is the story of Lyme disease. It raises the level of understanding of what it is and how pervasive it is in the United States, how pervasive it can be in the soft tissues and fluids of the body. I also found it to be compulsively readable, a page-turner." Amy Tan, NY Times best-selling author, from the Preface to the Update.

"The steady increase in Lyme disease cases from around the country is certainly cause for public health concern. It is important to have a comprehensive but easy to understand resource book to help patients, health care providers, and policymakers understand the challenges posed by Lyme and other tick-borne diseases." US Representative Christopher H. Smith, from back cover of the Update.
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