why childhood cancer is increasing

The escalating incidence of childhood cancer is being ignored by the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society, warns Samuel S. Epstein, MD and Quentin D. Young, MD, of the Cancer Prevention Coalition.

Since the passage of the 1971 National Cancer Act, launching the 'War Against Cancer', the incidence of childhood cancer has steadily escalated to alarming levels. Childhood cancers have increased by 26% overall, while the incidence of particular cancers has increased still more: acute lymphocytic leukemia 62%; brain cancer 50%; and bone cancer 40%.

The federal National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the 'charitable' American Cancer Society (ACS) — the 'cancer establishment' — have failed to inform the public, let alone Congress and regulatory agencies, of this alarming information. As importantly, they have failed to publicise well-documented scientific information on avoidable causes that are responsible for the increased incidence of childhood cancer.

Examples include:

- Over 20 US and international studies have incriminated paternal and maternal exposures (pre-conception, during conception and post-conception) to a wide range of occupational carcinogens as major causes of childhood cancer.
- There is substantial evidence for the risks of brain cancer and leukemia in children from frequent consumption of nitrite-dyed hot dogs. Consumption during pregnancy has been similarly incriminated. Nitrites, added to meat for colouring purposes, have been shown to react with natural chemicals in meat (amines) to form a potent carcinogen, nitrosamine.
- Consumption of non-organic fruits and vegetables, particularly in baby food, contaminated with high concentrations of multiple residues of carcinogenic pesticides, poses major risks of childhood cancer, besides delayed cancers in adult life.
- Numerous studies have shown strong associations between childhood cancers, particularly brain cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia, and domestic exposure to pesticides from uses in the home, including pet flea collars and pesticides for lawn and garden. Another major source of exposure is the commonplace use of pesticides in schools.
- The use of lindane, a potent carcinogen in shampoos for treating lice and scabies which infest about six million children annually, is associated with major risks of brain cancer. Lindane is readily absorbed through the skin.
- Treatment of children with Ritalin for 'Attention Deficit Disorders'. Ritalin has been shown to induce highly aggressive rare liver cancers in rodents at doses comparable to those prescribed to children.
- Maternal exposure to ionizing radiation, especially in late pregnancy, is strongly associated with excessive risks of childhood leukemia.

It is of particular significance that the cancer establishment ignored the continuing increase in the incidence of childhood cancer in its heavily promoted, but highly arguable, March 1998 claim "to have reversed an almost 20-year trend of increasing cancer cases."

The failure of the cancer establishment to warn of these avoidable cancer risks reflects mindsets fixed on damage control — screening, diagnosis and treatment — and basic genetic research, with indifference to primary prevention as defined by research and public education on avoidable causes of cancer.

For the American Cancer Society, this indifference extends to a well-documented longstanding track record of hostility, such as supporting the Chlorine Institute in defending the continued global use of chlorinated organic pesticides, and assurances in the 2002 Cancer Facts and Figures that cancer risks from dietary pesticides and ionizing radiation are all at such low levels as to be "negligible." This indifference to primary prevention is compounded by conflicts of interest, particularly with the giant cancer drug industry. Not surprisingly, The Chronicle of Philanthropy, the nation's leading charity watchdog, has charged that, "The ACS is more interested in accumulating wealth than saving lives."

The minimal priorities of the cancer establishment for prevention reflects mindsets and policies, not lack of resources. NCI's annual budget has increased some 20-fold since passage of the 1971 Act, from $220 million to $4.2 billion, while revenues of the ACS are now about $800 million. NCI expenditures on primary prevention have been estimated as under 4% of its budget, while ACS allocates less than 0.1% of its revenues to primary prevention and "environmental carcinogenesis."

It should be particularly stressed that foetuses, infants and children are much more vulnerable and sensitive to toxic and carcinogenic exposures than are adults.

The continued silence of the cancer establishment on avoidable causes of childhood cancers, besides a wide range of other cancers, is in flagrant denial of the specific charge of the 1971 National Cancer Act: "To disseminate cancer information to the public." As seriously, this silence is a denial of the public's inalienable democratic right-to-know of information directly impacting on their health and lives, and of their right to influence public policy.

Whether against cancer or terrorism, war is best fought by preemptive strategies based on prevention, rather than reactively on damage control. As importantly, the war against cancer must be waged by leadership accountable to the public interest and not, as is still the case, special-agenda private interests.

The time for open public debate on national cancer policy is long overdue.
school behaviour improved through nutrition – a miracle in Wisconsin

News item courtesy of the Wannabee Foundation, Sydney

OCTOBER 2002, Appleton, Wisconsin USA.

A revolution has occurred. It’s taken place in the Central Alternative High School. The kids now behave. The hallways aren’t frantic. Even the teachers are happy.

The school used to be out of control. Kids packed weapons. Discipline problems swamped the principal’s office. But not since 1997.

What happened? Did they line every inch of space with cops? Did they spray Valium gas in the classrooms? Did they install metal detectors in the bathrooms? Did they build holding cells in the gym?

Afraid not. In 1997 a private group called Natural Ovens began installing a healthy lunch program. Huh?

Fast-food burgers, fries and burritos gave way to fresh salads, meats “prepared with old-fashioned recipes,” and whole-grain bread.

Fresh fruits were added to the menu. Good drinking water arrived. Vending machines were removed.

As reported in a newsletter called Pure-Facts, “Grades are up, truancy is no longer a problem, arguments are rare, and teachers are able to spend their time teaching.”

Principal Lu Ann Coenen, who files annual reports with the State of Wisconsin, has turned in some staggering figures since 1997. Drop-outs? Students expelled? Students discovered to be using drugs? Carrying weapons? Committing Suicide? Every category has come up zero – every year.

Mary Bruyette, a teacher, states, “I don’t have to deal with daily discipline issues … I don’t have disruptions in class or the difficulties with student behavior that I experienced before we started the program.”

One student asserted, “Now that I can concentrate, I think it’s easier to get along with people ….” What a concept – eating healthier food increases concentration.

Principal Coenen sums it up. “I can’t buy the argument that it’s too costly for schools to provide good nutrition for their students. I found that one cost will reduce another. I don’t have the litter. I don’t have the need for high security.”

At a nearby middle school, the new food program is catching on. A teacher there, Dennis Abram, reports, “I’ve taught here for almost 30 years. I see the kids this year as calmer, easier to talk to. They seem more confident. I had thought about retiring this year but I’ve decided to teach another year – I’m having too much fun.”

Pure Facts, the newsletter that ran this story, is published by a non-profit organisation called The Feingold Association, which has existed since 1976.

Part of its mission is to “Generate public awareness of the potential role of foods and synthetic additives in behavior, learning and health problems. The [Feingold] program is based on a diet eliminating synthetic colours, synthetic flavours and the preservatives BHA, BHT and TBHQ.”

Thirty years ago there was a Dr Feingold. His breakthrough work proved the connection between these negative factors in food and the lives of children. Hailed as a revolutionary advance, Feingold’s findings were soon shredded by the medical cartel, since those findings threatened the drugs-for-everything, disease-model concept of modern healthcare.

But Feingold’s followers have kept his work alive. If what happened in Appleton, Wisconsin, takes hold in many other communities across America, perhaps the ravenous corporations which invade school space with their vending machines and junk food will be tossed out on their behinds. It could happen.

And perhaps ADHD will become a dinosaur. A non-disease that was once attributed to errant brain chemistry. And perhaps Ritalin will be seen as just another toxic chemical that was added to the bodies of kids in a crazed attempt to put a lid on behavior that was, in part, the result of a subversion of the food supply.

For those readers who ask me about solutions to the problems we face, here is a real solution. Help these groups. Get involved. Step into the fray. Stand up and be counted.

The drug companies aren’t going to do it. They’re busy estimating the size of their potential markets. They’re building their chemical pipelines into the minds and bodies of the young.

Every great revolution starts with a foothold. Sounds like Natural Ovens and The Feingold Association have made strong cuts into the big rock of ignorance and greed.

Wannabee comments: It is wonderful that more people are experimenting with the associations between diet and learning, and diet and behaviour. When Dr. Feingold was alive there were fewer artificial additives and preservatives than today and his diet allows soft fizzy drinks and sugar. Today there are more chemicals and additives and we know that the children can be highly sensitive to wheat, dairy products and sugar. As each child is different, it is important to first test for food sensitivities, and you may need to eliminate more than what Feingold suggests.

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