

Happiness Through Health

by **Otto McClarrin**

DIETING ADVANCE CLAIMED: A drug described as "making diets obsolete" for overweight people has been reported by three University of Illinois pharmacists. It has been only tried on rats, they said, and human trials are to start within a year. It has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for safety and effectiveness.

Called perfluorooctyl bromide, the drug is said to coat the lining of the stomach and intestines to prevent food from being absorbed into the blood stream. The barrier causes the food to pass out of the body rather than become deposited as fat, said Sarfar Niazi, one of the investigators. "Rats ate all they wanted without gaining weight," said Niazi.

The human trials will determine whether the drug will be able to selectively allow essential nutrients to be absorbed by the body in sufficient quantities to maintain health.

NEW DISCOVERIES MAY HELP SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH ARTHRITIS: Recent discoveries may lead to superior drugs for combatting the pain and inflammation of arthritis, medical researchers report.

Substances in cells called prostaglandins were recently discovered to play a major role in inflammation, some speeding up the process and some slowing it down, a research team from the New York School of Medicine announced recently.

The new information was gained through experiments in the United States, Sweden and Great Britain through investigating the reasons that aspirin and corticosteroid drugs relieve pain and inflammation in arthritis, the doctors said.

"We now understand how both aspirin and the steroids reduce inflammation by inhibiting prostaglandin production," said Dr. Gerald Weissmann. "Further, we have identified the additional impact of the steroids on other elements of the inflammatory process."

Corticosteroids are often effective but are prescribed sparingly because its use can leave a patient virtually defenseless against the lethal effects of an infection, the doctors said. They hope to develop a new drug which can block prostaglandin production without the ill side effects.

MENINGITIS VACCINE FOUND TO BE EFFECTIVE ON INFANTS: A vaccine which could be used to combat an epidemic-producing type of meningitis has been found to be effective in protecting infants from this life-threatening disease.

A study conducted during a recent epidemic in Finland of the Group A form of meningococcal meningitis has demonstrated that children as young as three months old remained free of the disease in the year following the vaccination.

The Finnish results, reported recently, were hailed by American health officials as a major step toward control of a devastating disease of worldwide magnitude.

"This is the first time a meningitis vaccine has been reported to protect children as young as three months - the age group at high risk for all types of bacterial meningitis. The results of the study may lead to the further development of other meningitis vaccines effective in the very young," said Dr. Richard M. Krause, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which helped fund the Finnish study.

Bacterial meningitis causes a serious inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord, leading to neurological damage and sometimes death. It usually starts with a sudden high fever, headache, stiffness and pain in the upper body, as well as a rash, although symptoms in infants are less specific.

NEW DAY BEGUN

by

Benjamin L. Hooks



As the oldest, continuing black institution, the church has been the most sustaining source of inspiration for America's largest minority population. During the darkest days of slavery, the Black Church provided spiritual strength as well as social development.

It protected as well as rescued the victims of slavery and human oppression from deprived marauders. It led in economic development through property ownership as well as in providing schooling for large numbers of blacks.

The common bonds between the nation's principal civil rights organization and the principal religious institution for blacks were therefore evident. Consequently, the NAACP, since its founding in 1909, has worked very closely with the Black Church. Such an umbilical relationship was natural since blacks, as a strongly religious people, represented the indispensable linkage.

The NAACP, as a consequence, for several years had an active church department. Through this program, the church provided the NAACP with inestimable support during some of the bitterest phases of the civil rights struggle up through the sixties.

To expand on this earlier beginning, the NAACP Department of the Religious Affairs has been reestablished. The Rev. J. C. Hope, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Macon, Ga., and president of the NAACP State Conference of Branches, has been appointed director.

To the realization that this programmatic expansion is timely, our membership has voiced a loud chorus of Amens. Rare in America's history have our spiritual foundations been under such sustained attacks. Since the end of the Second World War, our value system has not only been challenged, but it has been considerably transmuted. A primary reason, of course, has been the inability of our government and institutions to fulfill the dreams and hopes of millions of downtrodden Americans.

Other reasons include such crimes as the sordid Watergate affair that led to the resignation of a President and the imprisonment of many members of his Administration. Continually, we learn about the illegal activities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which spearheaded the destruction of lives and institutions.

The other institutional leader of clandestine operations, the Central Intelligence Agency, has been equally guilty of murder or fomenting murder and the destruction of duly constituted governments abroad.

As the two principal institutions which have survived the destructive forces of recent years, the NAACP and the Black Church must therefore lead a crusade of moral awakening in this land. The pillars of this drive must be the strengthening of the social, economic and political fabric of America's poor.

At the NAACP National Leadership Summit Conference in Chicago in April, the Religious Affairs panel recommended that the church "should be involved in all human endeavors, that tend to do with how, where, why, when and if men lived both in the here and the hereafter." Thus, the church must take a strong position on affirmative action programs as well as lead public demonstrations to dramatize the critical extent of unemployment among black youths.

The example of the Rev. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia in establishing a nationwide network of Opportunities in Industrialization Centers to provide job training should be followed. In education and international affairs, economic development and communication, health and social welfare, the Black Church should be partners with the NAACP, working for the freedom and betterment for our people.



Congressional Black Caucus Reports to the People

Until recently, there has been minimal concern for the mental health of Black Americans. This has been evident in racist stereotypes which have too often pictured blacks as being too lackadaisical and carefree to have emotional problems. Society's traditional response to real or imagined mental illness among blacks has been incarceration rather than medical treatment.

This is manifested in the rates for blacks in correctional institutions which are over nine times greater than those for whites and over four times higher in facilities for juvenile delinquents. Certainly, this data suggests vast inequities in the handling of behavior problems of persons from different social and racial backgrounds.

For example, I recently requested a series of studies from the Congressional Budget Office to examine the causes of and possible remedies for racial inequalities. One of these studies, "Health Differentials Between White and Nonwhite Americans" found that nonwhites experience nearly 50% more bed disability, 70% higher infant mortality, and a life expectancy six years shorter than that of whites.

Educational inequality is also a factor which contributes to stress. According to the study on educational disparities, Black Americans tend to have less formal schooling than white Americans. Though significant strides have been made in the area of education attainment, more than two-thirds of the white population had completed at least 12 years of school while fewer than half or 47% of the black population had.

Studies also show that unemployment creates stressful situations for laid-off workers and their families. Last month, the unemployment rate for whites was six percent while the rate for black workers was 11.8 percent. Black youth unemployment according to recent statistics is 35.3%, but in many inner-city areas the estimates are as high as 55 to 60 percent.

If these discouraging statistics are not convincing enough to prove that minorities are stress-ridden, all we need do is look at the statistics on poverty. Whereas fewer than 8.7% of white families are poor, in comparison, over 80 percent of black families, 34% of Native American families, and 21% of families with Spanish origin fall into this category.

Minorities are disproportionately represented in statistics on abusers of alcohol and drugs. Suicide has become one of the leading causes of death among minority young adult males and the rate for black women has risen more than 80% in the last 20 years, surpassing that for white men and white women.

Studies show that minority suicides result when the ability to cope with internalized frustration and anger at institutional racial bias breaks down. Furthermore, studies show that nonwhite is over seven times as likely to be a victim of homicide, more than likely at the hands of another minority.

To address the clear mental health needs of America's 39 million minority citizens, I have recently introduced the Minority Mental Health Support and Development Programs at the National Institute of Mental Health. The Stokes legislation will upgrade the present NIMH minority programs to a full division which will ensure the stable existence of a massive effort for minorities which is not subject to constant administrative changes.

Critical support through the division would also (1) increase the number of minority mental health professionals, (2) develop bilingual and bicultural programs, (3) encourage studies on the effects of discrimination on individuals and institutions, (4) Support the development of systems to assist minority populations in coping with such effects, and (5) develop special and innovative programs for the training of institutional mental health

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