

BIOCHEMISTRY

Sugar, Coronaries Linked

Increased sugar consumption rather than often-blamed fat consumption may be a direct dietary cause of coronary heart disease—By F. C. Livingstone, London

► JUST AS CIGARETTES can cause lung cancer so can sugar cause coronary heart disease. Studies of the diets of three groups of men in the 45-to-66 age range have convinced Prof. John Yudkin of the University of London department of nutrition that this is the case.

The sugar is the type that is commonly put into coffee, tea, candy, chocolates and ice cream.

Prof. Yudkin's groups consisted of 20 men who had recently suffered a coronary thrombosis, 25 with arterial disease of the legs due to atherosclerosis and 25 who were healthy. The results were startling.

The first two groups were found to consume habitually considerably more sugar than the healthy men. Total daily intake was 132 grams (4.6 ounces), 141 grams (4.96 ounces), and 77 grams (2.75 ounces).

Based on the results of this investigation, Prof. Yudkin contends that increased fat consumption, often blamed for the rise in coronary heart disease, is only indirectly responsible, whereas there is a direct relationship due to increased sugar consumption.

He points out that previous researchers have never tried to analyze carbohydrate

intake in the form of starch and sugar in the same detail.

The richer the country, the greater the average consumption of total calories, protein and fat. But total carbohydrate consumption does not alter much between rich and poor. What does alter, Prof. Yudkin points out, is the relative proportions of starch and sugar.

In the richest countries in the world starch consumption falls while that of sugar rises, within a more or less constant level of total carbohydrate consumption. Sugar intake, in fact, parallels the amount of fat eaten, both showing a four-fold increase.

If sugar is the dietary cause of coronary heart disease and if, as seems possible, the more sugar people eat the greater the risk, Prof. Yudkin suggests that control and prevention will be far more practicable than in the case of cigarettes and lung cancer.

He also suggests that a link will be proven between coronary heart disease and diabetes, other than the well-known facts that blood fats are raised in both conditions and that coronaries are commoner among diabetics.

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BIOLOGY

Easter Island Study Set To Precede Airfield

► MEDICAL RESEARCHERS are taking a trip to remote Easter Island in the South Pacific to study hereditary and environmental influences on disease there before civilization sets in.

Next year, the Chilean Government is expected to build an airport on this backward island. The airport is being built to accommodate tourists visiting the beautiful South Pacific area.

The expedition will be made up of four medical teams which will examine the island's population and collect biological samples. Participants will come from the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Chile and Scandinavia.

Easter Island, which is about 2,500 miles from the coast of Chile, has its only contact with the mainland once a year when a Chilean supply ship stops there. It got its name because a Dutch Admiral, Jacob Roggeveen, discovered it on Easter Sunday, 1722.

The expedition, which includes anthropologists, sociologists, nutritionists, geneticists, bacteriologists, virologists and general epidemiologists, will depart in November from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Organized under the auspices of the World Health Organization, the expedition is part of the Human Adaptability Panel of the International Biological Programme. A grant from the Medical Research Council of Canada is aiding the expedition.

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PSYCHOLOGY

'Good' Children May Face Difficulty Later

► MANY CHILDREN who seem good or obedient can be "problem children," a psychiatrist reports.

Dr. Charles E. Goshen, department of psychiatry, West Virginia University School of Medicine, Morgantown, W. Va., said such youngsters often agree with decisions made by others because they are fearful about making up their own minds. This could lead to difficulties later in life when these children are forced into positions of decision-making.

Much of the problem with "good" children is in their relationships with other people. Not wanting to arouse disapproval in others, such children accept decisions in hope of gaining favor.

Dr. Goshen estimated that two-thirds of adults who voluntarily go to psychiatrists for help picked up this "fearful compliance" to others during childhood.

Perhaps the most effective way to deal with this kind of child, Dr. Goshen suggests, is to show him, through many examples that other persons will think better of him when he makes his own decisions.

Dr. Goshen discussed this problem in GP, journal of the American Academy of General Practice, 30:78, 1964.

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