

The Link Between the Most Feared Disease and Critical Thinking

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Cancer used to be the most feared chronic disease but according to various surveys conducted in recent years, it appears as if dementia has replaced cancer as the disease people fear most. The link between dementia and critical thinking is undoubtedly the brain (in the skull) but this article will dig a little deeper...

People fear cognitive decline. According to Brederson (2014) cognitive decline is a major concern of the aging population and Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the major cause of age-related cognitive decline. It is estimated that about 5,4 million American patients and 30 million people are affected globally. The projection is that in 2050, 13 million Americans and 160 million people globally will have Alzheimer's. This can lead to bankruptcy of medical care systems and drastic steps are needed to prevent AD. Brederson furthermore points out that a woman's chance of developing AD is now greater than her chance of developing breast cancer.

Despite these alarming facts there is hope. Brederson (2014), functional medicine and integrative medicine researchers/practitioners report on therapeutic programmes and interventions that can reverse cognitive decline. What is thought-provoking is that these programmes and interventions include things that all of us should be doing routinely, e.g. optimize nutrition, balance hormones, reduce inflammation, fix digestion, enhance detoxification, boost energy metabolism and calm the mind (Menolascino, 2017). Eating fish, fruit and vegetables, exercising and avoiding inflammatory foods, etc., appear to be easy but why are people (in general) not doing this from an early age to optimize cognitive functioning and to prevent cognitive decline?

A paper published in The New England Journal of Medicine (2005), reported that for the first time in two centuries, the current generation of children in America may have shorter life expectancies than their parents. The paper indicated that the rapid rise in childhood obesity, if left unchecked, could shorten life spans by as much as five years. It was furthermore indicated that the prevalence and severity of obesity is so great, especially in children, that the associated diseases and complications (such as Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease, kidney failure, cancer, AD) are likely to attack people at younger and younger ages. This situation is similar in South Africa and in many other countries. Is it because people do not know what is healthy or unhealthy, or is it because they do not care, or can they not control themselves?

There is hope for cognitive decline but also the concern that people (and especially children) are not doing enough to prevent cognitive decline (and eventually AD). Mark Hyman explains why scientists now call Alzheimer's disease "Type 3 diabetes." There is a direct link between Alzheimer's and diabetes. New research

shows insulin resistance, from eating too many carbs and sugar (and not enough fat), is one of the key factors that starts the brain-damage cascade leading to a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. It is not only older people that are affected by too much insulin. Dementia begins when you are younger and takes decades to develop and get worse. Mark Hyman describes the bad news and good news. Eating sugar and refined carbs can cause pre-dementia and dementia but eliminating the sugar and refined carbs and adding lots of fat can prevent, and even reverse, pre-dementia and early dementia. If we however look around us at the average child or young adult, they are consuming processed foods, fast foods, sodas, sweet alcoholic drinks, sugars, etc. and many of them do not eat vegetables at all.

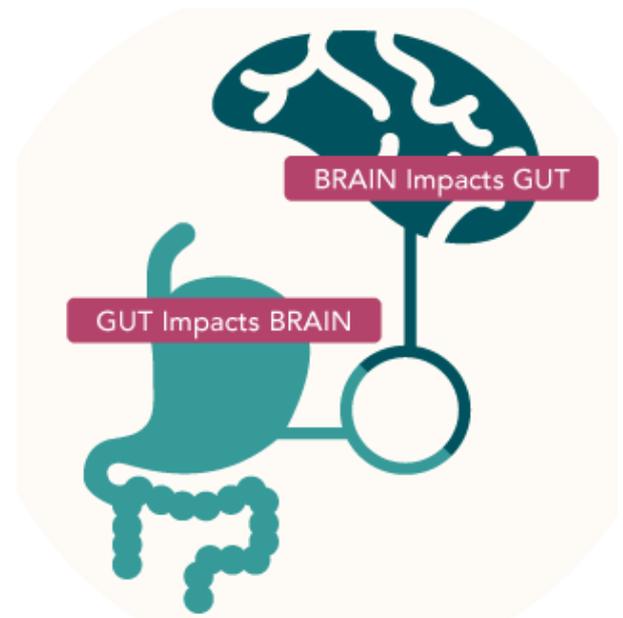
On the website <https://naturallydetoxyourbody.com/the-microbiome-your-third-brain> Rick Wilson superficially discusses two fascinating discoveries. Besides the first brain in our skulls (that we are supposed to use for critical thinking), researchers have now discovered that we have a "second brain" and a "third brain" and these discoveries have been revolutionary. The second brain is in the gastrointestinal tract (the gut). It communicates with the first brain through the vagus nerve and the sympathetic nervous system and influences mood and well-being. As a result, there has been a drastic change in focus from the brain to the role of the gut when dealing with brain-based disorders (such as depression, Autism, ADHD, Alzheimer's, etc.) Research also implicates that the second brain affects motivation and higher cognitive functions. What is very interesting is that the microbes in our bodies consist of 360 times more genetic material than are contained in all the cells in the human body!

The third brain is just as important. The leading researcher in this field is Dr Ruggiero. Ruggiero explains that the microbiome (third brain) is comprised of trillions of bacteria, viruses, fungi, yeasts, parasites and unknown microbes. About 70% of the microbiome is directly linked with the neurons that make up the second brain and the other 30% can be found throughout the body in sinus cavities, the skin, the blood, etc. The formation of the microbiome takes about three years from birth and research reports that caesarean born and non-breastfed babies develop their microbiome in a different way than babies that have been born via normal birth and that have been breast-fed. The discovery of the third brain has a huge impact on our health, our ability to function as humans and how it interacts with the other two brains.

New information is published daily about the second and the third brain and how it is connected to our physical, mental and emotional health. The explosion of information about these brains is overwhelming. Researchers and practitioners in the traditional cognitive education and critical thinking fields, professionals, teachers and parents (everyone) should understand the roles and interaction of the three brains. We need to understand the three brains for personal reasons (e.g. to prevent cognitive decline, to prevent chronic disease and to improve health) but also for professional reasons if we work with other human beings, especially if we do personal development or develop thinking and learning skills. This is however not a simple task and it is not always easy to identify reliable information sources. We need to think critically about all this new information to make sense of it but we must also avoid too much critical thinking. We must allow ourselves to become quiet (mindful) to find our true purpose in life and to 'choose life'. It has been said that a lack of purpose in life is a major cause of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's Disease. Something to think about!

We must all become MORE health conscious and help others to become MORE health conscious. We owe it to ourselves and we owe it to the people we love or work with.

If you have a desire to learn more about the gut-brain connection; the brain-gut connection; how these connections impact your immune system and health; the role of functional medicine and integrative



medicine; how to optimize health through nutrition; and how to become more health conscious; etc. you can attend a conference that is being held in Durbanville on 22 July 2017. Use the link below for more information about this conference or email estelle@brettenny.co.za

Here is the link:

<https://www.quicket.co.za/events/21267-be-more-health-conscious-and-help-others-to-beco...>

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