Midlife Matters: Update in Women’s Health

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Women and Dementia

- Women’s brains appear more vulnerable to Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) than men’s brains
- Women are 2/3 of Americans with AD
- Women with mild cognitive impairment decline faster than men
- Women have more amyloid on PET scans in brain which may increase risk of AD.
5-10% of people with AD have “early onset”
- Of those, half have inherited a genetic mutation
- 20 genetic risk factors that tip the scale in favor of AD (for early onset AD or AD in general?)
- APO E4 gene is present in 30% of the general population, but also present in 50% of all Alzheimer’s cases.
- Memory testing (Neuropsychological testing)
- Only definitive test is post-mortem (plaques and tangles)
Are there early hints?

• Navigation problems
• Confusion with day to day tasks (paying bills)
• Sleep fragmentation = early sign of cognitive impairment
• If you lose your keys, that’s normal. If you forget what your keys are for, that’s a problem.
• Anything that’s good for the heart, is good for the brain
• Exercise: BDNF is released during exercise = “fertilizer for the brain.”
• Sleep and Alzheimer’s: Brain pumps CSF which cleanses the brain (and therefore lessens AD?)
• Turmeric: dismantles plaques and tangles.
• Failed meds
Longevity

“Fear of dying is human, fear of aging is cultural”

- **Nutrition and Intermittent Fasting**
- **Social Relationships** = a key determinant of health and longevity.
- **Gut** = microbiome plays a crucial role in promoting health, preventing disease and shaping immune system.
- **Physical Exercise** = physically active individuals are healthier and live longer than sedentary ones.
- **Improving Sleep quality** = promotes health and well-being, consolidating long term memories.
Intermittent Fasting

• Reducing calories without malnutrition=extends healthy life span.
• If you eat 15 hours a day or more, that starts to be associated with metabolic problems, sleep disorders, etc.
• It turns out that it is important is to stick very close to 12 hours of feeding and 12 hours of fasting.
Intermittent Fasting Regimens

- **Time-restricted feeding**: limit food intake to a 6-8 hr time period daily.
- **500-800 calories every other day**
- **Consuming 500-700 calories two consecutive days per week.**
- **4-5 day per month Fasting Mimicking diet** (Prolon)
What does Intermittent Fasting Do?

• Maintenance of blood glucose level in low normal range
• Mobilization of fatty acids and generation of ketones
• Increased sensitivity to Leptin (hormone that suppresses appetite).
• Increased alertness/arousal
• Increased mental acuity.
Probiotics and The Gut

- Evidence suggests the gut microbiome has an impact on our health.
- Most of the microbes that live on or in humans are found in the GI tract.
- The Gut flora contributes 99% of the genetic material in the human body.
- Antibiotics, clean water and sanitation have limited the species in our gut.
Gut Flora: Nature vs Nurture?

- Vaginal delivery vs C-Section
- Children born by C Section=higher risk of obesity in later childhood.
- Breast fed vs Formula fed
- Pets
- Working or playing outside
How Can I Improve My Gut Flora?

- **Diet and Limit Antibiotics**
- **Dietary fiber helps maintain a healthy diverse microbiome.**
- **Antibiotics change your gut microbiome for years.**
Probiotics

• Probiotics have been shown to improve symptoms in many medical conditions.
• Pick a probiotic with multiple strains: Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium, Saccharomyces
• Kefir, Active Culture yogurts.
• VSL#3, Culturelle, Florastor, Visbiome
• Fecal Transplant
Turmeric (Curcumin)

- antioxidant
- anti-inflammatory
- anticarcinogenic (maybe)
- inhibits clots
- vasodilator
- antispasmodic
- may be effective in AD
Turmeric

- Irritable bowel, peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, knee and hip arthritis, psoriasis, Alzheimer’s.
- 2-3 grams per day
- Recent curcumin research revealed that curcumin boosts cognitive functions in humans.
Ahhh. The choices.
Magnesium

- Positive effects: Prevention of migraine headache, upset stomach, constipation.
- *Possible + effects:* painful periods
- Unlikely that magnesium supplements provide relief from leg cramps
- Unlikely magnesium helps lower blood pressure
- Unlikely magnesium prevents or treats atrial fibrillation
- Magnesium from food: nuts, green leafy vegetables, cereals and seafood.
- Waterborne Mg is absorbed 30% faster and better than Mg from food
Calcium Supplements and Bones Harmful or Helpful?

- Any benefit in preventing fractures is at best very small.
- Common GI side effects with calcium supplements.
- There is currently no consistent evidence of a relationship between dietary calcium intake and risk of fracture.
The Digestive System
Fight On!

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