

# The Nutrition Reporter™

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## EXTRA

The independent newsletter that reports vitamin, mineral, and food therapies

## A Case of "Othello's Syndrome"

Guest Commentary ©2007 Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD

The following case history summarizes the major change that has occurred from the psychiatry of 1950 and the orthomolecular psychiatry of today.

In June 2007, a 40-year-old man came to see me with his brother. He was a very busy and skillful artisan. He told me that he had suffered from anxiety and depression most of his life and, recently, from what he described as a delusional disorder. He had become extremely suspicious of any girlfriend, believing she was unfaithful. This delusion always broke up their relationship.

Five years ago he was diagnosed with schizophrenia, but recently was given a more esoteric diagnosis of "Othello's Syndrome" by his psychiatrist. A psychiatrist had prescribed Risperdal, 3 mg per day, but the drug made him more anxious, and he was also depressed most of the time. The patient denied having experienced visions or voices. He had been in a psychiatric ward twice, the last time for five days at the end of April this year. He had not used marijuana and cigarettes for the past two months.

When I saw him, there was clear evidence that he was allergic to dairy products. It was important for him to avoid dairy. I advised him to follow the following nutrient program:

- Niacin, 1 gram three times per day
- Vitamin C, 1 gram three times per day
- B-complex, 100 mg once per day
- Vitamin D, 4000 IU per day during summer and 6000 IU the rest of the year
- Zinc citrate, 50 mg per day
- Selenium, 200 mcg per day
- Vitamin B6, 250 mg once per day
- Salmon oil, 1 gram three times per day
- Apple cider vinegar, 1-2 tbsps in water with meals

Two months later he was normal. Othello had vanished, driven away by a few simple vitamins. Had he gone for help in 1950 he would have been offered deep psychotherapy, preferably psychoanalysis, and,

if he could afford it, weekly sessions or more often for up to 10 years, because many psychiatrists believed that paranoid ideas arose from unexpressed homosexuality.

At one of our conferences, the presenting psychiatrist described a similar case and then told us he was homosexual. I asked what was the evidence – had a patient in fact ever expressed any interest in men? The doctor replied that, of course, he was homosexual because Freud has shown this in a book he had written about one paranoid psychotic judge. The patient was paranoid which proved he was a latent homosexual. The odds are that this patient would eventually have wound up in some chronic mental hospital ward and later, if he survived, would have lived on the streets, as is the case with so many similar patients today.

This recovery shows that, in this person, no psychological complexes were involved, he did not need any psychotherapy. He was given the information every doctor must give to patients. He did not have Othello's Syndrome, whatever that is. This is another example of a psychiatrist attempting to develop fancy diagnosis by describing the expression of the illness in more and more detail and by attaching a name to it that gives it more cache.

The patient I treated was another example of a pellagra psychosis, the vitamin B-3 dependency, which can take almost any clinical form. When modern psychiatry becomes better informed it will depend upon simple laboratory tests and the response to vitamins to make the diagnosis. (No one would diagnose syphilis by describing the clinical symptoms – it is done by laboratory tests!) In brief, in 1950 there was no treatment for mental illness. Today there is – what a difference!

*Editor's note:* Dr. Abram Hoffer, still active at age 90, is a pioneer in the nutritional treatment of schizophrenia and other types of mental illness. His web page is [www.islandnet.com/~hoffer/](http://www.islandnet.com/~hoffer/)

# Reviews of Recent Books on Nutrition & Health

***Stop Prediabetes Now: The Ultimate Plan to Lose Weight and Prevent Diabetes***, by Jack Challem and Ron Hunninghake, MD (John Wiley & Sons, 2007). Forgive a little self-indulgence with *The Nutrition Reporter*<sup>TM</sup> writing about his latest book. There's a very good reason: prediabetes, which is usually intertwined with overweight, plays a central role in many of today's chronic health problems.

Unless reversed, prediabetes will inevitably lead to full-blown type 2 diabetes and obesity. It promotes inflammation (an undercurrent in all disease processes) and significantly increases the risk of coronary heart disease, some cancers, and Alzheimer's disease. The sad facts are these: two-thirds of Americans are now overweight, and upwards of 100 million Americans have some form of prediabetes, such as metabolic syndrome X, hyperinsulinemia, or impaired glucose tolerance.

What is the cause of this modern day epidemic? You could call it the "too many and too much syndrome" – too many calories, sugars, refined carbs, and trans fats. The average American now consumes a whopping 3,900 calories daily – twice what most people actually need. Nutritionally, it adds up to "the perfect storm."

Most of us know the solution, at least in theory: eat healthier foods, get a little more physical activity, and control stress. The problem is that it's often difficult to put these objectives into practice. That, I believe, is the beauty of *Stop Prediabetes Now*. The book provides a highly practical guide to sound dietary principles and to navigating supermarkets, natural food stores, and restaurants. It explains why people tend to overeat and how to avoid being sabotaged by unhealthy foods. Even if you don't have prediabetes, this book can help you navigate the dangerous seas of modern nutrition.

***Good Calories, Bad Calories: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom on Diet, Weight Control, and Disease***, by Gary Taubes (Alfred A. Knopf, 2007). The conventional medical and dietary wisdom needs to be challenged – it's anachronistic. For any number of reasons, scientists commonly ignore the meaning of their research, and dietitians and physicians repeat nutritional mythologies that have little proof.

The truth is that a calorie is not always a calorie. Even medical biochemistry books note that the body's blood sugar and insulin responses to carbohydrate and protein are as different as night and day. For decades, people have been told that fat is the dietary evil, and yet the bigger problem is processed

carbohydrates (starches and sugars) that elevate blood sugar and insulin.

Gary Taubes is a fellow nutrition heretic, and I have enjoyed his books and magazine articles over the years. In this book, he carefully unravels where scientist after scientist has gone wrong and ignored the obvious. It's a worthwhile read – all 600 pages.

***Alternative Cures That Really Work***, by Ronald Hoffman, MD, and Barry Fox, PhD (Rodale, 2006). There's no shortage of encyclopedic books that cover the nutritional treatment of every disease imaginable. Drs. Hoffman and Fox have zeroed in on 21 of the most common health issues, including anxiety, heart disease, and arthritis. They describe the symptoms, causes, and conventional treatments, but focus on sound alternative treatments. Unlike most other books that recommend supplements, Hoffman and Fox have created a five-star system to rank the best supplements for each particular condition. This is a practical approach because many people get distracted by arcane and less useful supplements.

***UltraLongevity: The Seven-Step Program for a Younger, Healthier You***, by Mark Liponis, MD (Little, Brown and Co, 2007). We often forget that there's more to a good life than just eating healthy foods and exercising. Dr. Mark Liponis, medical director of the Canyon Ranch resorts, has eloquently distilled seven simple-sounding but profound steps that contribute to a long, satisfying, and healthy life: breathe, eat, sleep, dance, love, soothe, and enhance. Sound a bit simplistic? Each of these steps influences the health of our immune system, which is often unbalanced (underactive or overactive) in disease and unhealthy aging. The book is easy reading, and it's actually fun to refer back to. We highly recommend it.

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