

Book Review

Cholesterol Control Without Diet The Niacin Solution.

William B. Parsons, Jr., Lilac Press
Box 1356, Scottsdale AZ 85252-1356
Hard Cover, 229 pages, 1998

Dr. Parsons, Jr. was the first person, outside of Saskatchewan, to test and confirm our finding (Altschul, Hoffer and Stephens) that niacin lowered total cholesterol blood levels. As a result of his work, which he began at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, niacin is established today as the foremost, best and safest compound known for normalizing blood lipid levels. By itself, when used at optimum dose levels it lowers low density lipoprotein cholesterol, lowers triglycerides and elevates high density lipoprotein cholesterol. As Parsons puts it, it does everything right. "No other drug currently available does even a few of these things." Of course he is right, although if you read the magnificent advertisements of the drug companies that sell their expensive cholesterol-lowering drugs, you would never believe that something which may cost eight dollars per month can be more effective than their patented medicines which cost anywhere from \$50 to \$150 per month. None of these statins have had the long study and usage of niacin, none have been proven to extend life span as does niacin yet the average physician knows almost nothing about niacin and those who do know something are afraid to use it because of the initial flush and because of the myth that it is highly toxic to the liver. All of these issues are addressed in this excellent book.

Special low fat diets are recommended for lowering cholesterol but they are difficult to follow and very few people adhere to them consistently and forever, which is what they have to do, and they are generally unsuccessful. I think that if the type of stone age diet I recommend was followed, (i.e. is low in sugar and with total fat levels

between 20 to 30 percent of total calories and high in fiber), then perhaps most of us would not develop these problems. However, once the problem is established and the levels are out of whack then the only solution is to use niacin. And besides it has a large number of positive side effects, including life extension.

I enjoyed reading this book immensely because I have been so involved in niacin's use in psychiatry for the treatment of schizophrenia in the same way Bill Parsons has been involved in treating patients with heart disease and, moreover, in treating his patients so effectively that they do not suffer heart disease.

In this book Parsons provides an excellent description of niacin, its properties, and how to use it. He points out that it must be used skillfully by doctors who are familiar with niacin. This is very important. I realized many years ago that whether or not a patient would take niacin in spite of the initial flush depended almost entirely on the interest of the physician in supervising its use. If the physician is reluctant or hostile you can bet that his patients will almost all find it intolerable. If he is sympathetic and convinced of its value almost all of his patients will have no difficulty with it whatever. Since niacin is perhaps the only nutrient ever proven to extend life, it is a pity that every doctor is not aware of its magnificent properties. In my opinion it is more dangerous not to take niacin because people who do take niacin, even after one coronary, live longer.

I recommend this book for every physician and certainly for every patient. I endorse Parson's suggestion that you buy two books, one for your doctor and one for yourself and your family.

A. Hoffer, MD, PhD, FRCP(C)