

Correspondence

Popeye and Scurvy

Kudos to Dr. Clemetson for his article, “Shaken Baby Syndrome or Scurvy?”¹ in which he draws attention to the medical neglect of Barlow’s disease, and provides helpful information on diagnosing vitamin C deficiency. Considering the prevalence data he cites, I find it lamentable that the sage counsel of Linus Pauling and Irwin Stone² has almost completely disappeared from public awareness in recent years.

I must take exception, however, to Dr. Clemetson’s characterization of Popeye as a “cartoon character for people to laugh at,” whose misery has become “an advertising cartoon.” On the contrary: Popeye is a sort of Everyman character whom we laugh with, not at. Since all of us are a little scorbutic, Popeye is every one of us. No wonder we love him.

Now that the truth about Popeye has been revealed, including the reason why he is edentulous



© 1936³

No Teeth-Use gums where required

We should disseminate it widely. Popeye could become the poster boy for good nutrition. In a very visual, intuitive way, Popeye makes the connection between nutrition (50 mg of vitamin C in a bowl of spinach⁴) and physical prowess. Children can learn about the relation between food and health from Popeye.

Popeye’s mantra is “I am what I am”,

which is very profound when one thinks about it. So are we all what we are: scurvy knaves who never have quite enough vitamin C. Let’s get the word out. Speaking of scurvy knaves, the miscarriage of justice to which Dr. Clemetson alludes is the natural consequence of a legal climate in which caregivers are obliged to act as agents of the police. The vindictive tone is set by a Justice Department that, contrary to State laws, threatens doctors who provide assisted suicide and prosecutes medical marijuana growers in kangaroo courts.⁵ That, I’m afraid, is a social disease which no amount of vitamin C will ever cure.

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References

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