

Book Reviews

Detoxify or Die

by Sherry Rogers

Sand Key Co. Inc., Sarasota, FL

2002, Softcover, 409 pages

This book consists of three main parts. In the first part, Dr. Rogers enumerates the amazing degree of contamination to which modern chemistry has subjected the whole world. During evolution, living organisms had to contend with some degree of pollution. By this I mean that they had to learn to deal with organic molecules and other environmental influences in order to survive, but these are minuscule compared to what has happened over the past century. The contamination of the air in a pine forest by terpenes is nothing compared to the pervasive contamination of our total atmosphere. The list of compounds, which are present in our food, air, water, and soils, in our houses, in our clothing and in our food containers, goes on and on. It made me quite sick to read about this and left me very discouraged that humanity might ever be able to reverse the trend before major damage has been done to all living organisms on our planet. Nature had plenty of time to adjust to the minor environmental changes. The gradual change of the atmosphere from nitrogen to nitrogen plus 20 percent oxygen had a powerful effect and led to the growth of oxygen-using organisms as compared to the anaerobes that were previously the only ones around. That change occurred over the last million years, but the present contamination with chemicals is exceedingly rapid, only 100 years or so.

Well, so what? Let us adopt the attitude of the industries that engage in this wholesale contamination of our environment. What difference does it make if we color our food with yellow dye as long as it looks good and promotes sales? In the second part of her treatise, Rogers shows exactly what the difference is. This is within

the province of the environmental physicians, clinical ecologists and environmentalists. This branch of medicine has been very slow to develop because it is not taught in medical school and it has been derided and suppressed for decades by the medical profession. Environmental toxins cause almost every type of disease of the nervous system, e.g. Parkinson's disease. An increasing portion of every medical practice consists of patients who appear to have classical diseases but do not respond to the classical treatment that might have worked at one time. We are bombarded with patients with chronic fatigue syndrome, with depression, with chronic gastro-intestinal problems and with chronic immune disease.

Rogers shows how toxins impinge on the body and wreak their havoc. By showing us what these chemicals can do to our bodies, she also shows us how much, if not all, of this can be avoided or dealt with by the proper use of nutrition and special nutrients. After reading the second section of this book I was somewhat less depressed.

The third portion deals with what to do. This consists basically of two major activities: (1) purify the environment as much as is possible; (2) improve the body's defenses against these toxins. Physicians working in this area have to be dedicated, even obsessive, about what they do, and very patient because the treatment for these conditions is never simple. It is slow, arduous and complex and tries one's patience so that many drop out. There is no single panacea treatment; no simple drug to cure, suddenly, what is wrong. I will not summarize the treatment protocols, as it would take too much space. This you will have to study for yourself by reading the book. I recommend that you do so and discuss it with your doctors if you have any condition for which you have not gotten a satisfactory diagnosis, or to which you have responded by becoming well. We need to honor and respect doctors like

Sherry Rogers, not try to destroy them as is being done in too many places today. After going through the entire book my sense of discouragement had lifted and I am optimistic that one day we will have many more good clinical ecologists who will help society establish ways and means of preventing most of the pollution that is present and who will assist many more patients recover their health.

—A. Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D

The Inflammation Syndrome

by Jack Challem

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ
2003, Hardcover, 258 pages

This is Jack Challem's third book for a major publisher, and his first with solo billing. Readers of this Journal may recognize the name. Challem has written scientific articles for the *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine*, as well as for *Medical Hypotheses* and *Free Radical Biology & Medicine*, among others.

With this book, Challem has hit his stride. Gone is his former pedantism and stodginess; his writing flows easily through the labyrinthine complexities of his subject, carrying the reader along for a journey of discovery that does not disappoint. Like Challem's other books (and hardly any other mass-market health books), this one is written for the intelligent reader. That means that physicians will enjoy reading it. They will also learn from it, owing to Challem's attention to detail and careful documentation.

The twelve chapters in the book are divided among four sections: the inflammation-disease connection; the anti-inflammation syndrome diet plan; the supplement plan; and putting anti-inflammation nutrients to work for you. Also included are a brief afterword, an appendix on medical tests, another appendix on

anti-inflammatory products, including sources of information and medical help, and a list of references for each chapter.

This book contains the seemingly mandatory elements that characterize this genre: self-assessment quiz (there are three); recipes and meal plans (22 pages); nutritional recommendations; warnings about dangerous drugs; and case reports. Several short case reports, garnered from leading orthomolecular and integrative practitioners, are scattered throughout the text, instead of all being placed together. They are used to illustrate particular points being explained in the text.

Part IV consists of a single chapter which encompasses diseases and specific conditions. Clinicians will find this especially useful. In all, twenty-one conditions are discussed in terms of definition, cause, prevalence, inflammatory processes, standard treatment, helpful nutrients, and additional nutritional components that might help. I was especially impressed by the thorough treatment of coronary artery disease as an inflammatory process.

Challem discusses essential nutrients, non-essential nutrients, and commonly-available herbs quite adequately. Entire chapters are devoted to beneficial fatty acids and to vitamin E. He emphasizes the positive role of natural foods, along with the need to avoid pro-inflammatory processed foods, and even provides an anti-inflammation food pyramid. The well-organized index, which runs to twelve pages, makes this information-packed book easy to use.

The inevitable error? Ah, yes. It's on page 226, where ISOM (which publishes this Journal) is incorrectly identified as the International Association for Orthomolecular Medicine. The internet URL is correctly listed.

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