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SWEET LITTLE LIES: REVIEWING LEMERNOND'S CLAIMS ABOUT DIETING AND THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Mr. Terry Lemerond presents a lecture in his educational webinar discussing the consequences of excessive sugar consumption while depicting a stark picture of the standard American diet and public health. Drawing on his experience in the natural products industry, he asserts that consuming high quantities of sugar incomparably damages the body, and that reducing intake, along with implementing proper dietary restrictions, is essential for overall health. Most notably, he declares that corporate manipulation has ingrained itself into the ingredients of common foods.[1] While some of his assertions may not fully articulate or align with the general scientific consensus, several of his claims regarding nutrition and its history are supported by scientific evidence and recent discoveries; therefore, his most prominent talking points should be carefully evaluated to ensure that those who engage with his material can make well-informed decisions about their lifestyle.

According to Lemerond, the American diet consists of 70-90% refined carbohydrates and sugar, claiming that the average American consumes between 150 and 250 pounds of added sugars annually—a dramatic increase from the early 1900s, when only four to six pounds were consumed yearly.[1] Presumably, these were the purported rates in 2017, when the webinar was first released. The CDC recently published two reports stating that, on average, adult men consume 19 teaspoons daily, while adult women consume 15 teaspoons daily.[2,3] Using an average of 17 teaspoons daily, the following calculates the yearly intake in pounds for comparison:

$$\frac{17tsp}{year} * \frac{4.2g}{tsp} * \frac{365days}{year} * \frac{1lb}{453.6grams} = 57.45\ lb/year$$

The discrepancy between Lemerond's sugar consumption figures and the recent USDA data warrants examination, as it seems unlikely that sugar consumption has decreased to this degree since the webinar's publication, especially since corporations continue manufacturing foodstuffs with consistently declining standards regarding the abundance of added sugar. Lemerond highlights that processed foods are the main source of sugar, citing examples like ketchup, which contains one-third sugar. Its prevalence in common consumer items makes sugar harder to avoid, even for those who believe they are steering clear of it.[1] According to the CDC, the main sources of added sugar include sodas, energy drinks, sweetened coffees and teas, desserts, candy, and breakfast cereals.[3] Still, some statistics don't quite align. One source coincides with Lemerond's graph (featured below) in stating that America is the largest consumer of sugar as a nation, averaging around 126.4 grams, or approximately 30 teaspoons, per day.[4] According to Lemerond, this consumption level ranks the USA last among the healthiest industrialized countries.[1] However, it is important to distinguish between per capita sugar consumption (the average amount consumed per person) and total national consumption (the total amount consumed by

the entire country). Although the United States ranks as the largest sugar consumer by total volume due to its large population, some smaller countries like Luxembourg have a higher per capita sugar intake.[4] This distinction may account for conflicting health rankings in different sources.

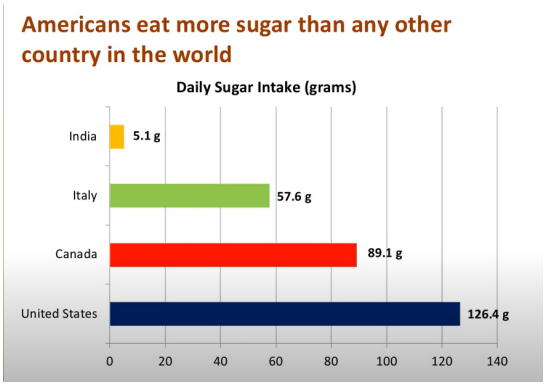

Fig. 1: Terry Lemerond's graph compares sugar consumption between notable countries. America was and continues to be the largest sugar consumer in the industrialized world.

It's unclear how each of these sources collected their data, but the inconsistencies parallel the dissent between independent health experts and current mainstream science, suggesting overexaggeration or miscommunication on Lemerond's part, or a deeper interference by unchecked corporations.

Lemerond traces the rise of sugar in the American diet to the 1940s and 1960s, when observational studies instilled fear of dietary fats in the public. He argues this fear is unfounded, claiming that saturated fats and natural oils are not inherently harmful. He points out that as manufacturers have reduced fat content in their products, they have often increased sugar content to maintain flavor and texture, as well as to extend shelf life. Lemerond characterizes sugar as poisonous when consumed in excess, arguing that the dynamic shift in nutritional suggestions has led to skyrocketing rates of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, impaired brain function, and cancer cell proliferation (likely by fueling glycolysis).[1] Other experts have previously recited this sentiment. In 2014, endocrinologist Dr. Robert Lustig, M.D., and author Dr. Nicole Avena, PhD, as referenced by Gretchen Voss, argued that gorging on sugar creates a surge of dopamine that triggers addiction and subsequent withdrawal symptoms akin to street drugs.[5] A more recent study from 2022 utilized epidemiological data to concur that high sugar intake, particularly during the perinatal and postnatal periods (from late pregnancy through early life), can increase impulsive behavior, stress, anxiety, and depression. These factors are known predictors of substance use disorder, likely due to sugar's neurologically altering the brain's reward system.[6] Lemerond accuses the sugar industry of manipulating scientific research to downplay the risks of sugar and demonize fats, citing that as far back as 1954, sugar executives were lobbying for low-fat dietary recommendations, knowing this would lead to increased sugar consumption.[1] Researchers from the health department of the University of California in San Francisco discovered a study published in JAMA International Medicine that revealed the Sugar Research Foundation secretly funded a 1967 literature review in the New England Journal of Medicine that downplayed sugar's role in coronary heart disease while emphasizing the risks of fat and cholesterol. The SRF paid Harvard scientists $50,000 for this review, set its objectives, contributed articles to be included, and received drafts, all without disclosing its role as the funder to the public. This review tactically shaped public opinion and the scientific community's perspective on dietary risk factors for heart

disease, shifting focus away from sugar and toward fat, contributing to the 1970s low-fat craze that occurred in tandem with a rise in obesity; consumers bought foods with reduced fat but high sugar levels under the misperception created by the review that all calories are equal.[7]

Lemerond criticizes the medical establishment for failing to address these concerns while pushing medication for the treatment of type 2 diabetes. He argues that the condition can be managed through dietary changes and increased physical activity—namely walking for 10 to 20 minutes daily—while emphasizing the importance of personal responsibility and accountability. He offers that people should make informed choices instead of relying on medical interventions that may follow potentially biased dietary guidelines. He recommends a diet rich in quality proteins, healthy fats, vegetables, and low-sugar fruits while avoiding juices and limiting complex carbohydrates.[1] The UCSF researchers who uncovered the previously mentioned conspiratorial documents expound on this idea by advising to be wary of packaged foods that advertise themselves as "organic," possibly alluding to the presence of sweeteners, while actively discarding tempting foods from the pantry and fridge.[7]

Lemerond makes another fleeting suggestion to research an herbal supplement called "Antonia," which had been available for six years (in 2017) and was studied for over sixty years by an unnamed German company. It can supposedly streamline the regulation of the body's blood sugar and A1C levels.[1] Due to errors in Lemerond's webinar transcript and despite investigative research, no such herb appears to exist in the public record with a similar name and background. The closest comparison in terms of popularity and function appears to be barberry, particularly its active compound berberine. This compound has shown promise in reducing fasting and postprandial blood glucose levels, along with lowering hemoglobin A1C levels, in patients with type 2 diabetes. Two studies cumulatively describe how barberry's roots, bark, and stems, which contain the highest concentration of the alkaloid active ingredient, have been used in traditional medicine for over 2,500 years.[8,9]

Fig. 2: A picture of Barberry, from The Clarenbridge Garden Center

Its hypoglycemic effects are comparable to the diabetes medication metformin because of its mechanism of action: enhancing insulin sensitivity, promoting cellular glucose uptake, and reducing glucose production in the liver.[8,9] Regardless of the identity of "Antonia," Lemerond emphasizes that lifestyle changes should be the primary method for achieving desired health outcomes.[1]

In short, Dr. Terry Lemerond offers a provocative critique of the state of the American diet and its governors. While his remarks may appear inflammatory or controversial, and some claims are left to

speculation, they reflect the historical nuances that have shaped public perception and the rigorous scientific research aimed at restoring healthy eating to its former glory,

highlighting the need for greater awareness regarding how people view seemingly innocuous meal choices.

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