



RENEWED HOPE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

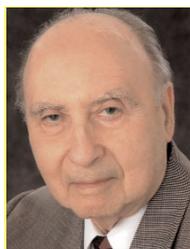
Old Drug-Based Paradigms are Breaking Down as Nutritional Medicine Continues to Cure Patients of Advanced Mental Health Disorders

BY HELKE FERRIE

If we're looking for evidence that the expensive and ineffective old paradigms of treating mental disorders are breaking down, we need to look no further than breaking stories in the news. Of further interest is the escalating public support of nutritional medicine as the alternative treatment of choice for a broad spectrum of mental illnesses, including schizophrenia and manic depression. Consider the following news items:

- On December 27 of last year, the *Washington Post* reported that the cost of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosed in US troops has reached \$4.3 billion, an increase of 150% since 1999. This figure does not even include yet the PTSD costs being incurred for troops returning from Iraq. A battle has begun in the US Congress over the government's attempt to limit payments to the country's "emotionally scarred troops."

- In January of this year and organization called the *Center for Science in the Public Interest* and the *Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood* launched a class action suit against Kellogg and other food producers for systematically harming children's health because they "primarily advertise foods high in sugar, fat and salt and low in nutrients." Proceeding under existing consumer protection laws, they announced that General Mills, McDonald's, Burger King and other companies are going to be next. (*Washington Post*, January 19).



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forms including faulty brain development, cognitive deficits, Down's Syndrome, depression, and schizophrenia.

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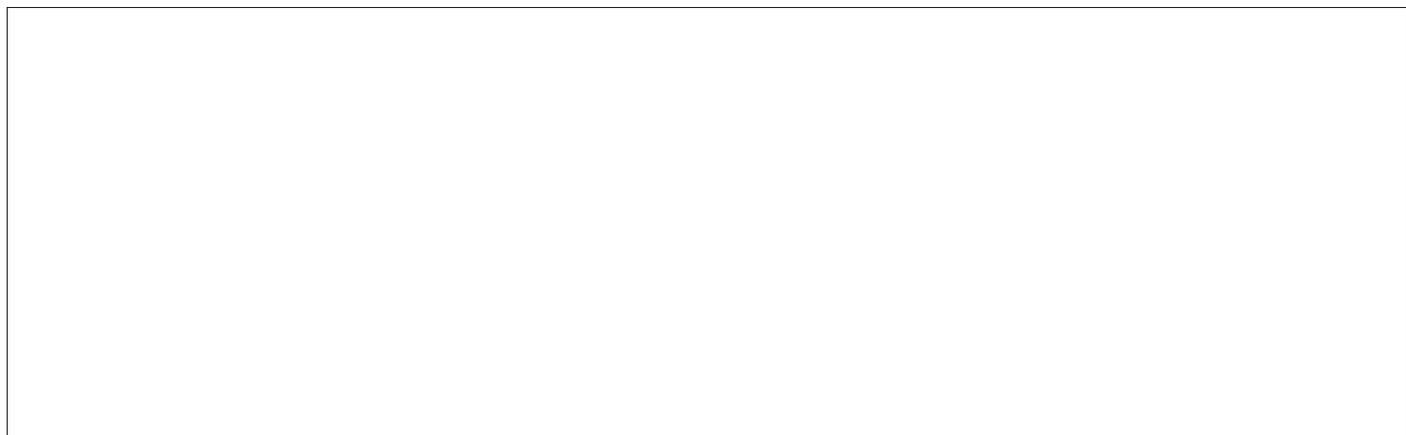
of evidence.

What do these four news items have in common? The truth that feeding the brain garbage — toxic or dead food, or toxic and deadly experiences — is the cause of mental illness in all its many forms including faulty brain development, cognitive

- Also in January, two UK-based consumer groups, the *Mental Health Foundation* and *Sustain*, published reports entitled "Changing Diets, Changing Minds: how food affects mental well being and behaviour" and "Feeding Minds: the impact of food on mental health" respectively (both free on-line at www.sustainweb.org). In these reports the scientific facts are assembled that show how food production methods, farming practices, advertising, and environmental policies may soon cause the cost of mental health services to rise to 100 billion pounds annually, because the diet does not contain the necessary essential nutrients, such as folic acid, omega-3 fatty acids, selenium, vitamin C, minerals, and the amino acid tryptophan. (This was illustrated in a pilot program carried out in Rotherham, South Yorkshire: mental patients were not allowed to eat convenience foods, snacks, chocolate bars, colas and refined sugar products. Instead, they were given essential nutrients: all improved rapidly and some recovered dramatically.)

- The October 2005 issue of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* was devoted to research articles focusing on the now increasingly undeniable fact that most psychiatric disorders (not induced by physical injury) are caused primarily by emotional trauma. The mythic "chemical imbalance," which automatically was assumed to be a Prozac deficiency, is evaporating for lack

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Even the ultimate sacred cow of standard psychiatry, the famous serotonin theory of depression, has expired. The new journal *PloS Medicine* (Public Library of Science Medicine – <http://medicine.plosjournals.org>) published an article in their December 2005 issue entitled “Serotonin and Depression: A Disconnect

between the Advertisements and the Scientific Literature.” Reviewing research since the 1960s when this hypothesis was first suggested, the authors conclude that the \$3 billion (US) antidepressant market, claiming this hypothesis as scientific justification for its existence, is based on nothing at all; they observe that “contemporary neuroscience research has failed to confirm any serotonergic lesion in any mental disorder and has in fact provided significant counterevidence to the explanation of a simple neurotransmitter deficiency.” They conclude: “The incongruence between the scientific literature and the claims made by SSRI [anti-depressant drugs] advertisements is remarkable, and possibly unparalleled.”

PloS, founded by thousands of US medical students and Nobel laureate Harold Varmus in 2004, was created in protest against the corruption pervading medical publications; PloS accepts no advertising, only publishes research free from all connections to the pharmaceutical industry, and is freely available on-line. Its founding medical students regularly campaign against corporate contamination of medicine by asking doctors to even return free pens given to them by drug reps.

PIONEERING RESEARCH IN MENTAL DISORDERS

The insight that the brain depends on real food and the right foods began in the late 1940s in Canada at the University of Saskatchewan with Dr. Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD. Dr. Hoffer's work could justly be described as an essential nutrient in its own right. His research, being based on the right questions, correct observations, and relevant assumptions, has functioned like a vitamin pill for the growth of medical knowledge. This so because such research sustains and nourishes every branch of inquiry it comes in contact with. Two months ago it was my privilege to publish his scientific memoirs, *Adventures in Psychiatry*.

For those of us who have learned through painful personal experience that drugs, surgery, and most of high-tech medicine offer only temporary benefits, but rarely if ever a cure, this book tells the wonderful story of the rebirth of nutritional medicine in the 20th century and its placement on new foundations of rigorous scientific methodology made possible through the parallel developments in biochemistry.

Over the past 60 years, Abram Hoffer's life's work has systematically transformed and informed major areas of modern medicine to the benefit of thousands of patients. Today, what is known about addiction, depression, schizophrenia, attention deficit disorders, the nutritional role in cancer prevention and

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treatment, the connection between stress and mental health, the nutritional deficiencies acting in synergy with vaccine toxicity in autism and the nutritional regimes to reverse this condition, as well as the nutritional treatment of cardiovascular/lipid disorders were either pioneered by Dr. Hoffer or co-developed alongside other giants in those fields. These giants include two-time Nobel laureate Linus Pauling (who coined the term orthomolecular medicine), Theron Randolph (the father of environmental medicine), Humphrey Osmond, Roger Williams (discoverer of pantothenic acid and other B vitamins), Irwin Stone (vitamin C pioneer), Bernard Rimland (autism research pioneer) and others.

This book will interest those practising naturopathy, pediatrics, environmental and addiction medicine. Medical historians will be fascinated. Patients looking for the basic science involved in the use of nutrition as prevention and treatment of mental disease will find it explained and contextualized for lay readers. It will also help readers get a better understanding of the resistance of mainstream medicine. This book also has a virtually complete bibliography of Dr. Hoffer's writings. Given that this octogenarian is currently working on several books, it is of course impossible to be completely up to date.

Adventures in Psychiatry is dedicated to Tommy Douglas who was Premier of Saskatchewan when Dr. Hoffer was professor of psychiatry in Regina. Douglas energetically supported Dr. Hoffer's efforts to humanize the appalling conditions in the mental asylums of that time and encouraged the research begun into the nutritional deficiency connections to mental disease.

In the book, we follow the author from his Saskatchewan farm childhood, to subsequent training in biochemistry and agricultural science, his early insights into the central importance of soil and plant food quality to human and animal health, to his specialization in psychiatry, professorship at the University of Saskatchewan, and above all his daily work with patients. We learn of his disillusionment with traditional methods of treating the mentally ill (e.g. lobotomies), and we share his excitement of discovery as we follow his dramatic case histories, which unfold like detective-stories, as he uncovers the connection between deficiencies in specific nutrients and mental illness.

CASE HISTORIES OF RECOVERY

One example is that of the first patient successfully rescued in the early 1950s from end-stage catatonic schizophrenia through vitamin therapy: “Ken ... lay on his bed unresponsive, not able to eat or drink. Catatonic deaths [among schizophrenic patients] were not uncommon many years ago. We decided to make him the first patient to receive massive doses of the two vitamins ... niacin and vitamin C. We were certain we could not do Ken any harm since he was so close to death. We inserted a tube into his stomach since he could not swallow. Then we poured in a mixture of five grams of nicotinic acid and 2.5 grams of ascorbic acid. We waited anxiously by his bedside he seemed to grow no worse as this regimen was continued. On the second day he was able to sit up and drink his solution of vitamins. One month later he was completely normal!”

The book goes on to describe other cases where his colleague Dr. Osmond used megadoses of vitamins to treat advanced mental health disorders at a psychiatric hospital in Weyburn, Saskatchewan:

“Mr. P.B. was referred to the Saskatchewan Hospital from the Monroe wing because he appeared to have either chronic Alzheimer’s Disease or catatonic schizophrenia. After arrival at Weyburn, he was very quiet for a few days but then became acutely psychotic. He had delusions about his clothing, and expressed fears that he would be killed, poisoned, and executed. He was started on nicotinamide, one gram daily, and in four days his behaviour returned to normal. He remained in hospital for six months and was discharged well.

“Mrs. L., age 25, was a post-partum schizophrenic. She was given ECT at the hospital, which provided temporary relief. Later she received 60 insulin coma treatments, which brought no improvement. She was then started on niacin and Vitamin C. One week later she was better and two weeks later she was well enough to be discharged.

“Mr. M., age 39, was very ill when admitted. He repeatedly said, “It’s too late.” He masturbated openly, paced aimlessly, was dirty and unkempt. This was his second attack in 18 months. He was started on 10 grams of each vitamin daily (vitamin C and niacin) and within three days was well.

“These brief descriptions are an account of what occurred in the first ... attempts at high dose vitamin therapy with diagnosed schizophrenia patients. Today I know we were actually giving small doses.”

Thus, Hoffer’s work began to offer patients recovery, not merely death-watch maintenance therapies. Long-time col-

league Linus Pauling observed that “Dr. Hoffer has made an important contribution to the health of human beings and the decrease of their suffering through the study of the effects of large doses of vitamin C and other nutrients.”

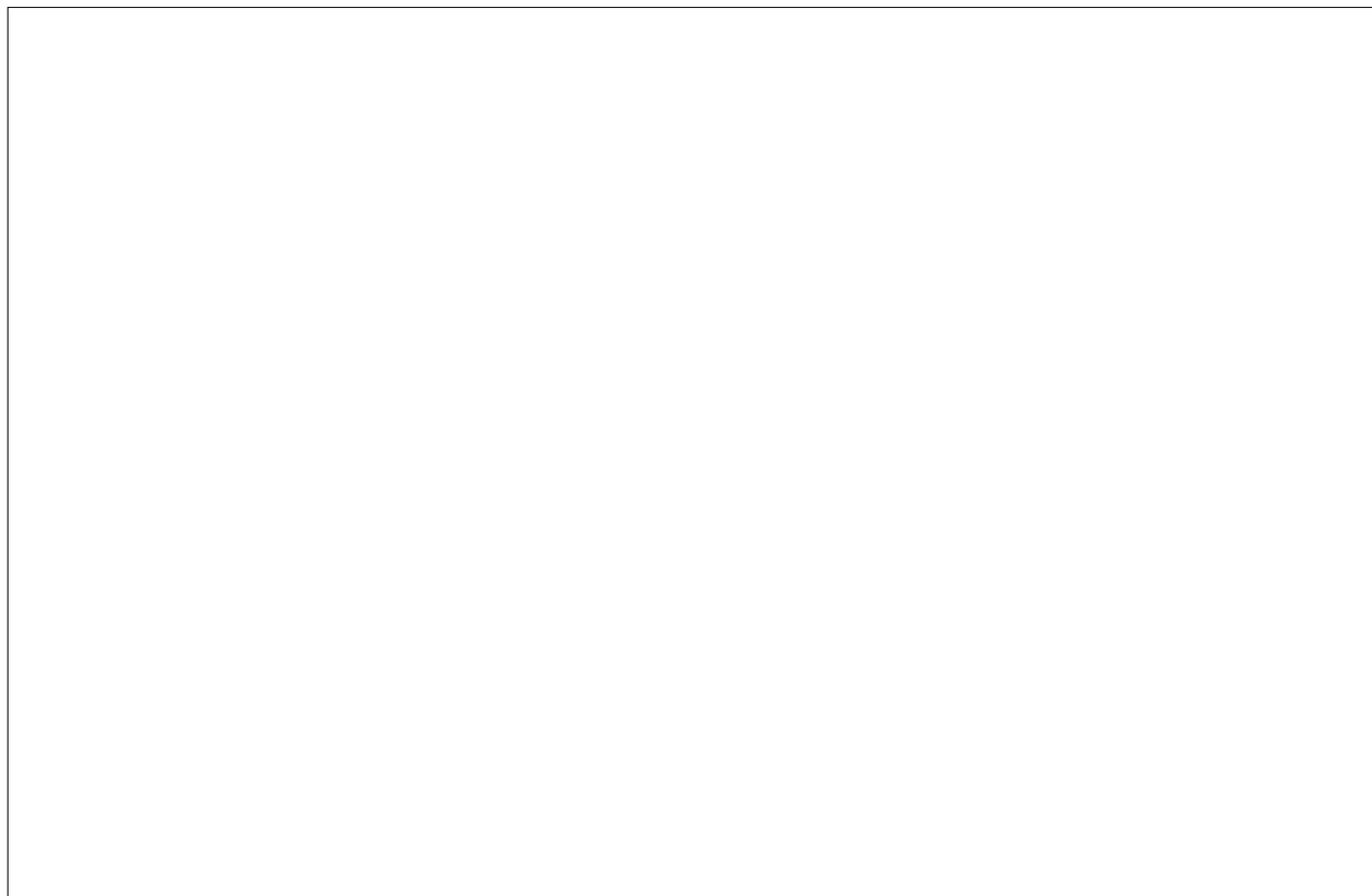
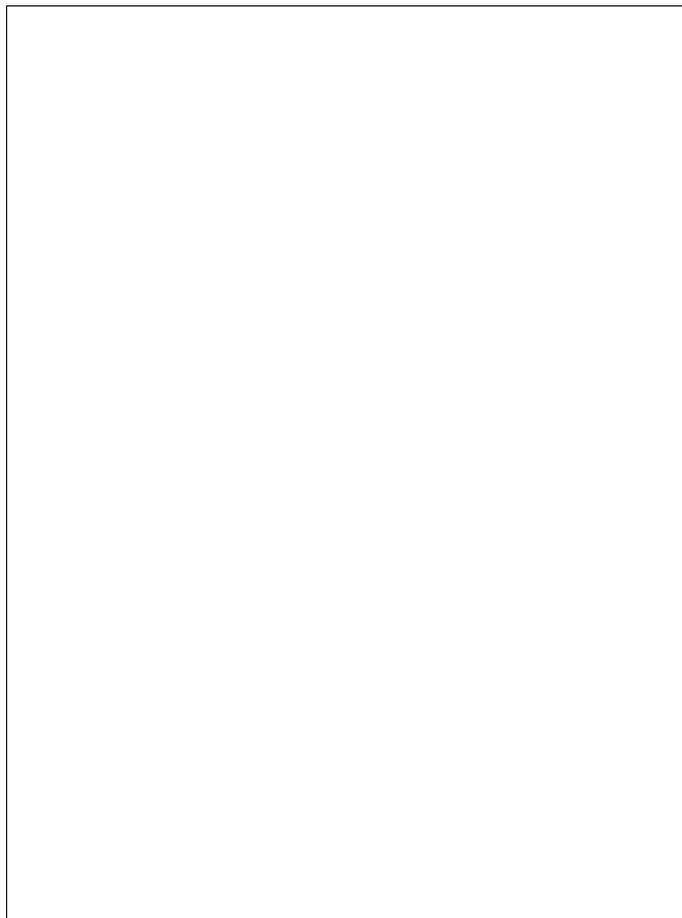
And we read how Dr. Hoffer patiently handled the insufferable stupidity and arrogance of medical authorities in government and at universities, often bent on preserving their pride and the status quo rather than focus on the suffering of patients.

Harold D. Foster, who teaches medical geography at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, noted about this book that Dr. Hoffer’s work with vitamins served to “undermine the reigning medical paradigms for psychiatry and cardiovascular disease. Fathering a new paradigm does not promote popularity. Fortunately, Dr Hoffer ... has consistently proven to be able to stand up for the truth, regardless of personal cost. Look around you, there are health food stores everywhere now, and thank Abram Hoffer for his courage.” Indeed, the first vitamin B tablets were made at the suggestion of Dr. Hoffer, back in the early 1950s, by a compounding pharmacist.

Since 1986 the Ben Gurion University in Israel has a chair for orthomolecular medicine, and the most prestigious universities in the world conduct research into the role of nutrition in the causation and treatment of mental and chronic disease.

In his closing reflections Dr. Hoffer writes that “if research is to have any value at all it must explore outside what is currently known.” He muses also about the fact that advice from ene-

Continued on page 96



Breakthroughs in Mental Health

– continued from page 15

mies and friends presents a major challenge to those who think outside the box. The enemies are easy to identify and their advice easily dismissed, Dr. Hoffer writes, but the advice of friends is harder to deal with: “The most common bad advice I received from friends was not to continue what we were doing because it made us unpopular. It took me some thought an effort to reject

this advice; I feel vindicated in this decision as I see that I have been very popular with my patients ... for the past 50 years.”

This year the 35th annual conference of the International Society for Orthomolecular Medicine will take place in Vancouver; the ISOM was founded by Dr. Hoffer, Linus Pauling and their colleagues. Each conference not only provides growing information on nutrition and mental health, but also on the nutritional deficiencies caused by emotional trauma. The complexity and interdependence of mind and body science is increasingly being revealed, but only to the extent to which doctors and researchers have become willing to discard the mechanistic prejudice so beloved by those who wish to make big bucks by offering expensive artificial, chemical concoctions to keep us numbed, stupid, addicted, compliant and above all as customers.

Truth is mind food. That is our most essential nutrient. Those taking on the processed-food industry to stop it from happily making mush of our brains and our children’s brains in the name of profit, are feeding truth as surely as those who review the medical literature and sort the facts from the advertising. Dr. Hoffer has been feeding truth to psychiatry for some sixty years. Now his work is becoming ever more contemporary and liberating.

Catch Helke Ferrie at Total Health 2006 where she will be a keynote speaker and coordinator of the special filmfest. For more information view the program at www.consumerhealth.org, or see ad on page 7.

Highly Recommended Resources:

Colbin, A. Food and Healing, 19th anniversary edition, 1996
Herman, J. Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror. 1997, Basic Books
Hoffer, A., MD, Adventures in Psychiatry: The Scientific Memoirs of Abram Hoffer, Kos Publishing Inc, 2005. www.kospublishing.com
Larson, J.M. Depression-Free Naturally, Ballantine Books, 1999
MacLeod, K. Down Syndrome and Vitamin Therapy, 2003
Rapp, D., MD. Our Toxic World: A Wake-Up Call, 200, Environmental Medical Research Foundation
Ross, J., MD. The Mood Cure, Penguin, 2002

All of these books are available through the Eternal Moment Book Store, located at 497 Bloor Street West., Toronto. Phone 416-924-3780 or send email to: eternal@eternalmoment.com. Or view their website at www.eternalmoment.ca. See advertisement on page 77.