

## **An Open Letter to All in Health Care or Who Simply Care About Health**

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Across all disciplines and modalities, those of us in health care share one important commonality - the well being of our clients/patients. Within this focus lays a primary principle when it comes to treatment - "first, do no harm". Is our current approach to nutrition and medical care really following this principle? In this article we'll look at the fallacy behind most diets and nutritional programs, the damaging and widespread health effects that women's birth control is having on the broad population (on both women AND men), the epidemic of copper toxicity, the problem with the current medical approach to treating key mental health conditions (including depression), our health system that perpetuates the suppression of holistic answers to a number of major health concerns, and how all five of these seemingly separate topics tie together. What you are about to learn here is rarely taught, poorly understood by most of those we entrust our health to, and certainly not on the radar of most people. Hopefully by shedding light on the aforementioned topics we can increase awareness and education for the eventual benefit of all. Currently however, far too many people are needlessly suffering with health issues for which medications and false dogmas are overly promoted, negatively affecting the physical and mental health of millions. The tip of this iceberg is evidenced through the statistics of 'iatrogenic disease'. If you've never heard of it, that's because the media rarely reports it, despite it being the third highest cause of death in the U.S., right behind heart disease and cancer. Iatrogenic disease means "accidentally caused by a physician or medical care". For example, a major study published in the Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine<sup>1</sup> shows that 800,000 people are killed annually in the US by conventional medicine, 7.5 million medical and surgical procedures are unnecessary, and 2.2 million patients suffer adverse reactions to drugs - and these numbers are largely under-reported! In a quote by Dr. Milton Silverman, M.D. (Professor of Pharmacology, University of California), he once stated:

*"Our figures show approximately four and half million hospital admissions annually due to the adverse reactions to drugs. Further, the average hospital patient has as much as thirty percent chance, depending on how long he is in, of doubling his stay due to adverse drug reactions."*

If decades of research has repeated to us warnings and provided evidence of a drug causing damaging health problems to a large number of people, would it not justify that drug being withdrawn from the market? Or, would it not mandate the prescribing doctor to, at the very least, warn the patient of such side effects? Usually this is the case, but not when it comes to something as common as women's birth control... the ripple effect from which affects both females and males. Millions of women are being prescribed the pill or the copper IUD, without receiving proper disclosure (and thus left almost completely unaware) of how these two things could impact their physical and mental health, indeed their entire lives, and those they love.

*"Birth control pills and copper IUDs - these two birth control methods definitely affect copper metabolism in the body. While some women can handle them, others experience depression, anxiety, personality shifts and many horrible side effects from them, either acute or chronic." ~Dr. Lawrence Wilson*

The problem is amplified as very few in the medical and mental health communities are trained to recognize the connection between these birth control methods and such common symptoms as hypothyroid, weight gain, brain fog, fatigue, depression, anxiety, ADD, OCD, bi-polar, increased moodiness and irritability, apathy, broken relationships, even conditions such as Alzheimer's or schizophrenia. At the heart of all these issues, very often, is either an adrenal issue, a copper

imbalance, or both. Dr. Richard Malter, Ph.D, who as both a licensed nutritionist as well as clinical psychologist, has spent the past 40 years studying the effects that minerals play on human psychology. In his book *The Strands of Health*, he explains this connection between copper imbalance and many of the aforementioned conditions. For example, he explains how:

*"One of the major syndromes with which copper excess is associated in younger children is with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)..."*

*"...Women (and adolescent girls) who use the "pill" for contraception increase the amount of estrogen in their system. This is strongly associated with an increased tendency to experience depression, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder."*

*"...Copper excess can be a significant factor contributing to a dramatic increase in the numbers of teen age girls and young women being psychiatrically hospitalized and medicated for "bi-polar" disorder."*

As far back as the 1970's, the ground-breaking physician and biochemist Dr. Carl C. Pfeiffer, M.D., Ph.D, a pioneer in the field of orthomolecular psychiatry, recognized the impact that birth control was having on women's health, warning about it in his book *Mental and Elemental Nutrients: A Physician's Guide to Nutrition and Health Care*. Over the next several decades, through the evidence provided by Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis ((HTMA) a screening tool for mineral toxicities and deficiencies), we've seen an ever increasing mean level of copper and calcium showing up in women's bodies. Though the connection with a copper IUD is obvious, where is the connection between copper and the birth control pill? Anything that raises estrogen (which the pill does) in turn raises copper retention. Copper itself is not bad, in fact copper is an essential mineral for the health of the body. Once it rises too high however, a simultaneous toxicity (too much) / deficiency (bio-unavailable) condition is created, leading to a wide assortment of problems. Of course, placing a copper IUD in the body directly feeds more copper into the system, even though it's promoted as a safe "hormone-free" alternative. Almost every woman with a long term history of birth control pill or copper IUD usage will show a level of overt or hidden copper toxicity (and as bio-unavailable copper rises, so too does calcium). Coincidentally the same mineral pattern is true for long-term vegans. These effects aren't always caught through blood testing, but can be clearly seen through properly interpreted HTMA data. Yet it is blood testing that doctors (and most studies too) almost always rely on in order to determine a toxicity or deficiency condition, and is a key reason why the extent of this epidemic remains largely unrecognized. The problem isn't helped when ob-gyn's refuse to acknowledge this copper connection, or when the public is presented with no shortage of articles online, some even written by 'trusted' celebrity doctors or nutrition coaches, who simply regurgitate the message that we all need to consume more copper and/or that toxicity is not usually an issue as the body is self-regulating and rids itself of excess. Even a basic training in HTMA would very quickly dispel such erroneous notions. Chalking the copper toxicity epidemic up to being nothing more than a dysregulation issue is also missing the point as it ignores the more important discussion of why this epidemic exists in the first place - overexposure, from various sources as mentioned throughout this article (which is why men can also be effected), to higher and higher levels of bio-unavailable copper which then manifest effects which are toxic on the body. Only once we acknowledge this overexposure (a developing trend over the past half century) can meaningful dialogue be initiated that in turn may provoke science to seek and create safer alternatives.

*"Virtually all MDs, including psychiatrists, still have not heard of this health problem. They practice medicine and psychiatry with an incredible lack of awareness that such a serious health problem even exists. They claim to be practicing "evidence based medicine", yet they are practicing without the most basic evidence – real laboratory data showing the presence of excess (toxic) copper that has a profound effect on both the physical and mental health of the vast majority of their patients. Ever since Carl Pfeiffer, MD, PhD first wrote about the devastating health effects of copper toxicity in 1975, it has been a challenge for him and others among us to get the message out to the public and health professionals." ~Dr. Richard Malter, Ph.D.*

Prior to the advent of birth control, the majority of the population, generally, had higher levels of sodium and potassium relative to lower levels of calcium and copper (a pattern known as a fast oxidizer as termed in the 1970s by Dr. George Watson, Ph.D. and further developed by the pioneers in the science of nutritional balancing, Dr. Eck and Dr. Watts, Ph.D.). Today however, the pattern has reversed, with the majority of the population having higher levels of calcium and copper relative to lower sodium and potassium (a slow oxidizer pattern). This important shift can only be evidenced through HTMA data, and has profound implications in all aspects of health. Yet, HTMA still flies under the radar of most practitioners, while doctors still receive very little training in how nutrition in general affects health - let alone the intricacies of how mineral imbalances affect nearly all aspects of mental and physical well-being.

Minerals are all interconnected, and have synergistic or antagonistic relationships with each other. For example, as copper rises, it depletes zinc, potassium, and magnesium, while raising calcium. Calcium slows the thyroid while potassium speeds it up. Thus, as calcium rises and potassium drops, the thyroid slows, leading to hypothyroid. When sodium is high relative to low potassium, one's stress response is intensified, and anxiety can turn into rage, panic, negativity, even suicidal thoughts. Under this intense stress (as again can be clearly evidenced through HTMA), magnesium is lost from inside the cell, leading to magnesium deficiency. As a result of both internal and external stressors, most of today's population is, in fact, magnesium deficient. Low magnesium in the face of high calcium (especially if one is then supplementing with calcium as many women are told to do) increases the risk for osteoporosis, as well as muscle cramps, low blood sugar, addictive behaviors, violence, and heart attack (in fact, low magnesium was linked as a cause to 8 million sudden coronary deaths in America during the period 1940-1994.<sup>2</sup>) As the Weston A. Price foundation explains, "*Magnesium shines brightest in cardiovascular health. It alone can fulfill the role of many common cardiac medications: magnesium inhibits blood clots (like aspirin), thins the blood (like Coumadin), blocks calcium uptake (like calcium channel-blocking drugs such as Procardia) and relaxes blood vessels (like ACE inhibitors such as Vasotec)*"<sup>3</sup>. In other words, pharmaceuticals are trying to treat symptoms that are caused by nutritional deficiencies and which can be corrected by restoring nutritional balance. As an example, high blood pressure drugs result in a loss of magnesium, and yet magnesium loss itself causes high blood pressure! The allopathic approach to pushing pharmaceuticals is insanity, especially when we know that mineral imbalance is, in most cases, the underlying cause, and we have tools that can effectively ascertain mineral status. The two most accurate testing methods to determine magnesium status are HTMA as well as RBC magnesium testing, and yet these are two tests that many physicians won't offer, or in some cases, aren't even familiar with.

*"Mineral deficiencies are responsible for a host of health problems, which are incorrectly treated by drugs." ~ Dr. Robert Thompson, M.D.*

Returning to the discussion of copper, without efficient detox pathways, copper will build up in the liver, and weaken the adrenals, leading to brain fog and increasing fatigue. As the adrenals weaken, copper becomes more and more bio-unavailable (due to lowered production of the copper binding protein ceruloplasmin), and with this build-up, stress increases further, as do anxieties and depression, especially as copper subsequently accumulates in the brain. In fact, copper toxicity is one of the most common causes of depression, anxiety and hypertension, yet is hardly ever recognized or even heard of by most practitioners or the public. We know that birth control usage is linked to depression (this study<sup>4</sup>, the largest of its kind with over a million women, showed that those on the Pill were 23% more likely to suffer from depression, and that number jumps to a staggering 80% in teenage girls!). Though this becomes news today, those who understood the Pill's connection to copper knew and warned about this, as previously mentioned, over 40 years ago!

*"Many of the most prevalent metabolic dysfunctions of our time are related in some way to a copper imbalance." ~ Dr. Paul Eck*

If copper is allowed to go too high, calcium will increase to form what is known as a 'calcium shell', a condition which has a significant numbing effect on emotions and awareness, and which can ultimately destroy even the most loving of relationships. Already here we can begin to see how cardiologists, relationship counselors, psychiatrists, doctors, and nutritionists could all benefit from this understanding.

*"I would venture to say that divorce courts are loaded with people who's relationships were destroyed by copper toxicity" ~ Dr. Richard Malter, Ph.D.*

Though we're talking a lot about copper here, we also need to understand the importance of addressing adrenal dysfunction. In our modern day and age we are bombarded with chronic stressors from all angles - nutritionally, emotionally, and in lifestyle. People can readily grasp the concept of being stressed when the pressures of life or emotional issues build up. They can feel it. Hidden from one's awareness though is the stress being caused internally by nutritional imbalances and toxins. Though we don't feel these building up, those toxicities (copper being a big one, amongst others) are silently wearing away at our adrenal's ability to perform optimally. Conventional medicine only recognizes two adrenal issues, Addison's Disease (a rare form of adrenal failure), and Cushing's Disease (when adrenals are on overdrive producing cortisol all the time). However there are a million stages on the spectrum between extreme hyper adrenal and extreme hypo adrenal, and yet this isn't recognized medically. This is unfortunate, as adrenal dysfunction/fatigue is also a primary contributor to a wide range of health issues, and especially again when it comes to depression. If you think about it simply, depression is a state of low energy. You can't be feeling up, energetic and enjoying the things you used to love when your body (adrenals) is exhausted. Instead of addressing the underlying cause of the depression (such as copper toxicity, or adrenal exhaustion, or in some cases clearing up early childhood traumas (refer to the ACE Study), anti-depressants are simply prescribed to mask the symptoms. Why aren't more mental health workers, coaches, and counselors taking the time to understand this potential nutritional component?

Neurotransmitter levels and brain functioning is further affected as copper accumulates. When neurotransmitter levels get out of whack they further add to issues of depression, fatigue, anxiety, insomnia, and various psychological changes. As zinc and potassium drop further (which copper build-up causes), digestion becomes impaired, with insufficient hydrochloric acid being produced, making meat protein less and less tolerable, while further increasing depression and a sense of apathy. The person may turn to stimulants such as coffee, alcohol, chocolate, running/exercise - all of which provide their fatigued adrenals a boost and making the individual feel temporarily better, but at the cost of further depleting their long term energy reserve. Left unchecked, copper build-up can even lead to Alzheimer's and schizophrenia. Alzheimer's, the 6th leading cause of death in the U.S. and rapidly increasing, is said to be "the only disease among the top 10 causes of death in America that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed", according to the Alzheimer's Association (alz.org). And yet, if we dig just a little deeper, we'll see that we do have the power to control it, by coming to grips with, and acceptance of, its connection to copper. Indeed, research clearly shows that Alzheimer's patients consistently have elevated levels of copper in the brain. In a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), Rashid Deane, Ph.D., a research professor at the University of Rochester Medical Center Department of Neurosurgery, explains, "*It is clear that, over time, copper's cumulative effect is to impair the systems by which beta-amyloid is removed from the brain. This impairment is one of the key factors that cause the protein to accumulate in the brain and form the plaques that are the hallmark of Alzheimer's disease.*"<sup>5</sup> It wouldn't seem very hard to connect the dots

between ever increasing prevalence of copper toxicity (which, due to estrogen, affects women more than men) and why Alzheimer's is far more prevalent in women, and also increasing year after year. Through an understanding of minerals, we know that as copper accumulates, zinc decreases, and numerous studies show that zinc deprivation kills cells in the hippocampus - an essential part of the brain for the formation of memories. Where does the National Institute on Aging say that the damage to Alzheimer's begins? In the hippocampus!<sup>6</sup>

Regarding schizophrenia, studies have shown that a majority of cases have high levels of copper.

*"We first discovered copper as the cause of histapenia, a schizophrenia-like disorder characterized by high serum copper and low serum histamine levels. Although many patients were previously classified as suffering from unresponsive schizophrenia, our experience reveals they are simply copper poisoned. Additional nervous syndromes which have been documented in conjunction with high copper levels are stuttering, autism, childhood hyperactivity, tinnitus, hypertension, eclampsia, premenstrual tension, psychiatric depression, blepharospasm, psoriasis, arthritis, tardive dyskinesia, insomnia, senility, & functional hypoglycemia."*

*~Dr. Carl Pfeiffer, M.D., Ph.D*

We know that through nutritional balancing, conditions such as schizophrenia and ADD can often be controlled<sup>7,8,9,10</sup> - without the use of dangerous psychotropic drugs which only further impair health and ignore the underlying cause. Yet, this approach is hardly ever used, with more profitable pharmaceuticals quickly prescribed instead. While though perhaps not in all cases can mental illness or physiological disease be adequately (or in a timely enough manner) improved through nutritional balancing alone (which does take time), should the nutritional approach not at least be looked at as an avenue for treatment before prescribing dangerous drugs? Should this connection not be essential training in medical school and in counseling practice? Currently it is not, and it is a travesty that so many people are needlessly medicated to the hilt (as an example over 3 million Americans are prescribed anti-psychotic drugs at a cost of \$18 billion!<sup>11</sup>) while those caring for them remain largely oblivious to the role minerals play in physical and mental health. One lady pursuing her career in clinical psychology, specializing in schizophrenia psychology, who through her own independent research had awakened to this realization, recently shared the following,

*"My head is spinning with the idea that mental health problems could originate from mineral imbalances. It's made me angry at the modern mental health system that I've been working in and disillusioned with therapy. I'm angry that I'm stuck on anti depressants and angry that other people suffering with mental health problems are trapped in the mental health system without the knowledge that I now have." ~Tabitha Dow*

Though women are at higher risk of copper-related health problems stemming from estrogen and their exposure through birth control, men also are at risk. In addition to other copper sources (drinking water from copper pipes, industrial exposure, copper sulfates in herbicides, xenoestrogens, vegetarian/vegan diets...), copper is passed in utero to the fetus. So if the mother has elevated copper, chances are her child, boy or girl, will begin life with an elevated level as well. This passing down of copper from generation to generation is why, with each successive generation, we are seeing an ever-increasing epidemic of copper toxicity and associated symptoms. This connection must be acknowledged within the broader medical community. Until it is, women will continue to be given birth control without receiving proper informed consent (a legal and moral right deserved by everyone), drugs will continue to be administered which often do more harm than good, and countless cases of physiological and psychological conditions will continue to be misdiagnosed and lives affected.

DESPITE THE WARNINGS given 40 years ago, the findings from four decades of research since, and the hard evidence provided by hundreds of thousands of HTMA profiles; and despite countless women

testifying how the pill or copper IUD has devastated their health and lives and pleading for their doctors to listen, the conventional medical community continues to deny that birth control usage (and subsequent resulting mineral imbalances) could have a link to many of the most serious and prevalent health conditions we are seeing today. This is not to deter from using birth control, but rather to encourage practitioners and the general public to recognize and understand the imbalances and symptoms that can result so that proactive correction can be achieved before it's too late. DESPITE THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT that stored bio-unavailable minerals and metals do not stay in the blood... the medical field continues to rely on serum blood tests for diagnosis or a measure of progress, falsely believing that blood serum provides an accurate indicator of mineral toxicities. DESPITE MINERALS BEING THE BASIS to all nutrition (not to mention, life itself), most nutritionists still pay almost no attention to assessing a client's mineral status before designing so-called "customized" nutritional programs. DESPITE bio-unavailable copper playing a primary role in everything from anxiety to depression to schizophrenia, the mental health community continues to prescribe dangerous psychotropic drugs without first looking at or even acknowledging that a remedy could exist through the safe and holistic correction of a mineral imbalance. It's time we show the courage to place health before profits and outdated dogmas. We must learn beyond what we've been taught. Those that dismiss HTMA or the importance of mineral balancing are not only doing the greatest disservice to their patients, but through their own lack of understanding or willingness to learn are holding back the advancement of greater medical and nutritional understanding. Too many lives have already been hurt or destroyed as a result of medical ignorance (no matter how well intentioned), and the health of our future generations, especially our young women, is most at risk. It's time we move into a new paradigm of health, recognizing the interconnection between our environment, food choices, and minerals levels, and how those interrelated minerals affect, and indeed control, our health, even our personality. Only through education and knowledge can we, the public, empower ourselves to make better health decisions, and hopefully one day those we entrust to treat us will follow our lead. Leaving outdated medical and nutritional beliefs behind, let's open ourselves to knowledge which can truly serve the greater good of people. When women receive fully informed consent to birth control, when nutritionists understand the essentialness of program design based on rebalancing minerals, and when the medical system allows for greater conversation on the role mineral imbalance and adrenal health plays in disease, what are the possibilities for our world in terms of reducing illness, increasing human energy, and saving relationships and lives? More and more we are seeing forward-thinking practitioners using HTMA and mineral balancing as a tool to serve their clients. However until HTMA is much more widely accepted as an effective and essential screening tool for mineral imbalance and subsequent correction, and until the fact is broadly recognized that mineral imbalances play a key role in both physical and mental health issues, the risk to ourselves, and our loved ones, will continue; iatrogenic conditions will increase; and many health answers will simply remain elusive.

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3 <http://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/your-body-on-drugs/>

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