

Jackie Burke

The Woodlands High School

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Sugar: Death Disguised as a Sweet

Nowadays people are not safe from the deadly disease of cancer. In the past, it was thought to be unusual to get cancer, but unfortunately that is no longer the case. From “Cancer Statistics”, it was found that last year there were around 1,806,590 new cases of cancer of which 606,520 people died. And, although there are many causes of cancer which may be genetic, lifestyle, diet or environmental, an infographic by Cancer Research UK says, “overweight and obesity is the UK’s biggest cause of cancer after smoking”. People cannot change their genes but they can change their lifestyles. One positive lifestyle change is to maintain a healthy diet. A cursory review of research indicates sugar contributes to cancer because unhealthy cells feed off the glucose in sugar and healthy cells do not get any nutrients from sugar. Cancer is caused from sugar and making a dietary lifestyle change to eliminate sugar will decrease the chances of cancer and prevent cancer from metastasizing which is now recognized by oncologists as a significant part of decreasing cancer statistics.

Over the last 200 years, individuals' nutrition changed to include sugar and drinks which has increased cancer and lifestyle changes to eliminate sugar needs to occur. In the article, “The Metabolic Approach to Cancer Treatment”, Dr. Mercola discusses the transformation of carbs explaining how, “low-carb eating...was actually normal carb eating until about 1850, when we started to process sugar, flour, and salt and...put it in everything. We were all...low-carbers” (Par. 72). Low carb eating involves eating natural fruits and vegetables grown from the earth.

Prior to processed foods, low amounts of carbs were consumed. As people transitioned to processed foods like sugar, flour, and salt, cancer rates have increased. Nutrients in food grown directly from the earth do not include processed sugar which causes cancer. In “You Can't 'Starve' Cancer, but You Might Help Treat It With Food”, Locasale, a cancer biologist at Duke University, says “For a long time, the prevailing thought was that altered metabolism in cancer cells was the result of genes and mutations that determined metabolism,” but “now, as we know, it’s a complex interaction of environment and genes, and one of the major factors at play is nutrition” (Par. 4). So, although genes may contribute to cancer, it is clear that there are environmental risks which contribute to contracting cancer and nutrition is one of those environmental risks. Poor nutrition which includes sugar contributes to the death of good cells which cannot live off of sugar. As people age, the cancerous cells gain strength because there are fewer healthy cells to attack cancer cells. In addition, cancer cells are adaptive and to survive, the cancerous cells adapt to feeding off of glucose. In “Scientists Spent Years Studying the Connection between Sugar and Cancer, and What They Found Was Horrifying”, Young discusses the Warburg effect as, “...a phenomenon in which cancer cells rapidly break down sugars” (Par. 2). It was found that cancerous tumors converted significantly higher amounts of sugar into lactate for cancer to grow, while the healthy cell tissues did not convert sugar into lactate to cause this cancer growth. Cancer cells are highly adaptive to staying alive and have found a way to survive off of glucose. Therefore, this provides evidence of a positive correlation between sugar and increased amounts of cancerous cells in tumor growth.

Oncologists have become aware of the benefits of nutritional changes which includes limiting sugar consumption to eliminate cancer or reduce tumor growth. In “Why Cancer Rates Have Skyrocketed in The Last 100 Years”, Gabriel, from One Clever Chef, “ Education is the

best weapon in this silent biological war” (Par. 23). It is clear that a healthy diet which excludes processed sugar can lower the risk of cancer. Eating healthy makes a person's cells healthier so they may fight off cancer cells which attempt to create tumors in a person's body. Unfortunately, oncologists miss this very important point of nutritional health and contend chemotherapy and radiation alone are the cure for cancer. In “The Metabolic Approach to Cancer Treatment”, a fed up Nasha Winters, MD, says “Unfortunately, you will likely have to track down people out of network, out of pocket, to get the proper treatment, to actually test, assess and address your cancer to your biochemically unique self to have a good outcome. That sucks, but that’s just the way it is right now” (Par. 92). Dr. Winters is aware of the resistance by healthcare professionals to use alternative treatments like glucose restriction for cancer care. This resistance by oncologists is a major reason sugar continues to contribute to cancer increases. Winters is aware of the high costs associated with alternative treatment approaches which consider cancer a biological disease. There is a vast amount of research linking nutrition to cancer, however pharmaceutical companies have not accepted this idea because of the money associated with chemotherapy and radiation treatments. In “The Metabolic Approach to Cancer Treatment”, an interview with Dr. Joseph Mercola, Nasha Winters says, “You know, a few years ago, I would not have even had an opportunity to sit down with a general family practitioner and have this conversation” (Par. 85). Oncologists are beginning to adapt to the metabolic approach to cancer. They have found that it decreases their cancer statistics. Also, cancer patients with poor prognosis and recurrences, have also branched out to explore alternative treatments which require eliminating sugar from their diet. Showing a concession on the part of doctors, Winters makes it clear that oncologists were resistant but they learn that a dietary approach to fighting and preventing cancers is just another tool for the patients.

There are still many oncologists who feel the metabolic approach to fighting cancer is incorrect. In “Sugar and Cancer – What You Need to Know”, Smith writes, “There’s no evidence that following a “sugar-free” diet lowers the risk of getting cancer, or boosts the chances of surviving if you are diagnosed” (Par. 21). These oncologists believe Warburg is incorrect in his position that cancerous stem cells feed off of the glucose in sugar. They do not feel that a person’s healthy cells improve through eliminating sugar because people eat better to supply energy to healthy cells. This proves there are many oncologists who refuse to link glucose to cancer. In the article, “Eating Less Won’t ‘Starve’ Cancer, but Eating Healthy Might”, Halter says, “... they do not feel that processed sugar lowers healthy cells ability to fight off unhealthy cells...”but “...a low-sugar diet could help combat some cancers—but warning that the link is likely not as direct or simple as “eat less sugar to stop cancer” (Par. 4) Halter confusingly refutes the sugar, no sugar debate when she says sugar will not stop cancer, while at the same time, concedes that it may “combat” some cancers. Halter believes more research is needed to understand which cancers are “combated” by sugar. Also, her use of the term “combat” falls short of saying, limiting sugar consumption may “stop” cancer growth. Therefore, she indirectly concedes there may be a direct correlation between sugar consumption and cancer growth. In the end, in the article “Sugar and Cancer – What You Need to Know”, Smith concedes, “ there is an indirect link between cancer risk and sugar...” (Par. 33). Smith refutes all theories that link sugar and cancer, however, she agrees that being overweight leads to cancer. There are thirteen different types of cancer linked to obesity and obesity is the second leading cause of cancer. Therefore, limiting sugar consumption reduces obesity which ultimately decreases cancer statistics. Research proves there is a link between cancer and sugar, and eliminating sugar decreases the chance of getting cancer.

To decrease the chance of getting cancer or cancer metastasizing, people must limit processed sugar consumption. People eat more sugar now than ever before in American history. As people age, healthy cells die off and cancer cells feed from glucose in the body. Eating processed sugar contributes to the increases in cancer and death statistics. However difficult to change, oncologists are beginning to accept a metabolic approach to cancer and recommend a dietary restriction of sugary products. Oncologists are conceding this adds to their arsenal on the war against cancer. If oncologists cannot agree that cancer is fueled by sugar, they can at least agree that sugar causes obesity which causes cancer, and eliminating sugar from a person's diet may help to "combat" this disease. Eliminating sugar makes a small but significant change in the war on cancer. Not all wars are won in a single battle. It is clear that this war will be won by many small battles of which one is sugar. So people must take the plunge. Give up processed sugar.

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