The Role of Diet and Nutrition to Addiction and Recovery
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The human body is an ancient model that has withstood the test of time within its purpose and design on the planet. It is endowed with intangibles like spirit and divinity enshrouded in a mystic realm that continues to defy discovery of the minutest atoms and makings of the body prolific that would lend to its unholy reproduction except through the only sanctioned reproductive process that makes life the reality that we all conceive. When properly nourished and cared for, according to the prescriptions of nature and universal forces, the body can heal itself and accomplish many amazing feats of strength and endurance as well as foster the qualities that define humanity.
Cross Section of Brain with Pineal Gland
HUMAN BRAIN ANATOMY
Why Nutrition?

- Persons suffering from addictive disease simultaneously suffer other medical conditions like hypoglycemia, hypothyroidism, depression, depletion of vitamins and minerals, diabetes, heart disease, and other conditions.

- By improving the overall health of the person greatly increases the chances for recovery. Adding raw food elements to the diet helps to detox and cleanse the body, mind, and spirit. Many persons fail in treatment because they are unable to attain this balance.

- Addictive substances are considered poisons by the brain and come not just from illicit substances like cocaine, alcohol, but also foods, medications, allergens for various sorts, and other contaminants.

- The body relies on its organs and immune system in general to combat, neutralize, and expel these toxins from various organs, tissue, the blood stream, and body in general.
DIET AND NUTRITION IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE CLIENTS

A Fun Day at the Marketplace
How Drugs Affect the Brain

- Research has shown that the various drugs taken affect the reward system of the brain by shotgunning it with dopamine.
- Since the reward system is linked to promoting a behavior or function that is life sustaining, the brain takes necessary steps to remember this task or function thus formatting a pathway to addiction or dependence.
- The brain responds to an increase in dopamine and other neurotransmitters due to drug intake by reducing the amount and/or shutting down various receptor sites. Thus, in order to get the same or greater rush, larger quantities of the drugs must be taken (tolerance ~ dependence).
- These type of changes can lead to changes in neurons and brain circuitry with the possibility of causing long term instability in the brain itself.
Neuroscience vs. Behavioral Approaches to Addiction

• The neuro-scientific approach to addiction is based on the notion that the brain undergoes changes that are a direct result of chronic or continuous use of addicting substances in increased amounts over a period of time. It attempts to identify an association between brain functions and behavior.

• The behavioral approach simply states that addiction results from maladaptive behaviors where drugs and alcohol serve as strong reinforcers to the behaviors that establishes control over other behaviors.

• So, neuroscience seeks to discover changes in the morphology or biological makeup of certain areas of the brain affected by various classes of drugs. Much work is being done in this area and where it leads or ends up is yet to be seen but it’s safe to say that neuroscientist see addiction as a behavioral disorder.

• According to researchers Winger et al, 2004, the behavioral approach to addiction assumes that drugs are not qualitatively different from non-drug reinforcers.
Neuroscience vs. Behavioral Approaches to Addiction

• The neuro-scientific argument that simply focuses on brain changes is somewhat weakened because of the fact that there is currently no validated and reliable measure of addiction.

• Other factors like genetic differences, socio/biological conditions, political/economic agendas, play critical roles in the production of an addicted brain.

• Opportunities exist for both approaches to work together to amass a collective body of knowledge and strategies to intervene in addictive brain disease.

• This must be done in concert with reducing other social/political re-enforcers that support addictive disease.
• The food industry removes the natural ingredients of foods thereby marketing chemically altered foods for us to eat.

• For all practical purposes, these products are drugs, not food, but they fill your stomachs. After an extended period of time, this starts the disease process within the body attacking various organs or bio-systems.

• A sound method of identifying chemically/processed foods is by its white color. For example, white sugar, white flour, salt, white rice, white grits, etc.)
Addictive Synthetic Chemicals

Some of the addictive synthetic chemicals that are found in food and that we are programmed to eat/use are:

- Sugar
- Nicotine
- Caffeine
- Salt
- Cocaine
- Vinegar
- Oil
- Opium
- Valium
- Amphetamines
Addictive Foods: Sugar

• According to Kathleen DesMaisons, PhD., sugar is responsible for several addictive personalities. According to her, sugar acts like a drug and triggers the very process that clinicians and patients are trying to suppress when involved in the treatment process.

• Sugar affects the biochemistry in two ways: 1) it raises the level of serotonin, which regulates moods and emotions. When this “rush” wears off, the person is left with feelings of depression, low self esteem, etc.; 2) it increases the levels of “pleasure” neurotransmitters triggering impulsive behaviors and cravings for more sugar.

• Dr. DesMaisons recommends that patients seek a SUD counselor and physician who understand and believe that diet and nutrition not only play a major role in the way you feel but also in the process of recovery. Diet and natural remedies can support the changes in behavior that are targeted for change. 7
The following is a list of foods that are addictive. The list is not exhaustive:

- Ice cream (poisonous thinners, sodium hydroxide, neutralizers).
- Processed cheeses (molds, yeast, emulsifiers)
- Peanut Butter
- Table salt
- Margarine
- Oil
- Chewing gum (55-60% sugar).
Addictive foods: SODAS (POP)

- Carbonated Sodas contain:
  - Emulsifiers
  - Artificial colors
  - Synthetic flavors
  - Glycerin
  - Anti-foaming agents
  - Salts
  - Caffeine
  - Synthetic sweetners
  - Preservatives
Addictive Foods: Meats

- Meats have nitrates which are a causal link to mood swings, hyperactivity, mental illness, and other associated disorders.

- Food coloring irritates the brain and causes allergic reactions.

- Chemically altered foods are addicting and cause cravings.
Detox is Crucial to Health Including Withdrawal from Illicit Drugs
Types of Detoxification Methods
Detoxification is considered by many as being the first step to recovery

- **Natural Methods of Detoxification** - Liver cleanse, oxygen colon cleanse, candida cleanse, parasites, liquid cleanse, toxic metal cleanse, raw fruits and vegetables, and other methods. These methods vary according to the practitioners.

- These methods help to cleanse and stimulate the liver and kidneys to help drive toxins from the body while also enhancing elimination through the intestines and skin. This promotes greater absorption of needed nutrients and minerals into the body.

- Many practitioners accompany some of these strategies with spiritual rituals and ceremonies.

- **Drug Detox Methods** (for acute withdrawal symptoms)
  - Outpatient may need to be monitored more often without medical supervision
    - Cold Turkey
    - MAT is fastly becoming a common practice in the field today
  - Inpatient detox (residential) is the preferred method to ensure proper monitoring and to stand ready for emergencies that may arise.
    - Methadone
    - Buprenorphine
    - Naltrexone
    - Acamprosate
    - Disulfiram
How to Incorporate Diet and Nutrition in Treatment Planning

• Once assessment and patient level of care are identified, develop treatment plan with patient participation. Initial focus should be on the problematic substance and the effects or perceived effects on the body and behavior. Plan should map out means of helping the body withdrawn and recover from the trauma of drugs and or alcohol on the brain to attain a healthy state.

• Assess also for COD to determine whether the plan may be impeded by its influence. Explain the importance of nutrition to recovery and how it may help the patient in his or her recovery. Buy in by the patient is critical.

• Once buy in is attained, identify a nutritionist/dietician to whom the patient can be referred to assist in identifying food stuffs that are organic in nature that possess the healing and cleansing properties needed.

• It is important to have a clear indication of the patients assets at this time to assist in attaining treatment goals. For example, does he or she have insurance (Medicaid, Medicare), do they have money to purchase certain foods etc.
How to Incorporate Diet and Nutrition in Treatment Planning

• During the time of transition in the field of SUD and mental health disorders, the integration of behavioral health and primary care will have brought about various changes. A primary care physician and payor source may be more available to patients since the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Seek a physician who recognizes the importance of diet and nutrition to recovery versus popping pills.

• Explain how diet and natural remedies can help in recovery. This is especially important during the detoxification stage of recovery.

• Focus on simple things in the treatment plan that a patient can address without the specialized input of a specialist (Nutritionist/dietician).

✓ Eat breakfast every day.
✓ Eat lunch and dinner
✓ Switch from eating white foods to brown foods.
✓ Reduce sugar intake.
Dr. Joseph M. Mercola, DO of Illinois, suggests some steps he considers important for establishing a basic nutrition plan:

- Eliminate all wheat, gluten, and highly allergenic foods from your diet.
- At least 1/3 of your food should be uncooked.
- Eat more vegetables
- Keep your vegetables fresh
- Limiting sugar and fructose is crucial
- Avoid hypoglycemia
- Learn to distinguish physical food cravings from emotional food craving.
The Role of Nutrition to SUD and Mental Health Treatment

• In a paper titled “the Role of Nutrition Care for Mental Health Conditions (2) published by the Dietitians of Canada in 2012, the researchers asserted that “Diet Therapy should be recognized as the cornerstone of mental health interventions in clinical practice guidelines and standards of Care. Adequate funding is needed for nutrition services in mental health care, with monitoring and evaluation for effectiveness and efficiency”.

• The effects of various drugs and alcohol lead to the depletion of various nutrients in the body thus leading to primary or secondary malnutrition.

• Knowing these facts, the role of the SUD/MH clinician as recommended by the Dietitians of Canada should be to:
  - Advocate for nutrition in SUD/MH practice
  - Improved program planning and collaboration
  - Screening and standards in Nutrition and SUD/MH
  - Mental health and Nutrition Research
The Role of Nutrition to Recovery in SUD and Mental Health Treatment

- There are nutritional concerns associated with certain drugs:
  - Weed causes people to crave and eat foods with no nutritional value (i.e. junk foods)
  - Cocaine is associated with various eating disorders, deprives the brain of air decreases circulation
  - Amphetamines suppress appetite
  - Depressants may interfere with proper functioning of the gastrointestinal system.
  - Methadone affects appetite and causes changes in weight as well as other nutritional problems.
Q & A
"That's all folks!"
Notes

1  http://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2005/04/700000-physicians-1200000


References


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