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Q&A: Woman Power & Femininity. **Ancestral Human Biology:** Obese Pregnant Moms program their fetuses for Heart Disease. **Human Behavior:** Relationships best between those of similar desirability. **News Shorts:** Good diet beats depression; Alzheimer's Lifestyle Links. **Q&A:** Mate attraction & success rate. **News Shorts:** Gut bugs, western diet, bowel cancer; omega-3s lower blood pressure; Lager, alcoholic or not helps gut bugs; Bank stools for transplant later in life; Antibiotics wreak havoc on athletic performance; Need to boost muscle strength; Resistance exercise for sleep. **Book Review V:** Hunter Gatherer's Guide to the 21stC.

Question

Woman Power & Femininity

In: **Liberals & Conservatives see faces differently**, [May 2022](#), you say: "So we are programmed to instinctively select a leader based on signs of dominant physical features." But what of a string of female leaders from Jacinda Ardern to Margaret Thatcher who are all very 'feminine' in appearance?



<https://bit.ly/3p5EewH>

A. Actually, the article was not about femininity at all. Indeed there is no incompatibility between dominant physical features and femininity. Famously Margaret Thatcher was known as "The Iron Lady" and she had her dreaded 'gamma-ray stare' which "thicks man's blood with cold." So it was that flirtatious government minister, Alan Clark, declared that: 'She had very pretty ankles and little feet and pretty wrists.' Yet, when she grilled him over his performance as minister, "she turned him to jelly".

Ancestral Human Biology

Obese Pregnant Moms program their fetuses for Heart Disease

A study found that the hearts of fetuses of obese female mice were larger, weighed more, had thicker walls and were inflamed [1].

My View? Obesity was unknown in our forager past. It is a dysfunction which sickens even unborn babies.

Human Behavior

Relationships best between those of similar desirability

People of similar desirability are most likely to pair up, and have long-lasting and successful relationships.

At least, so finds a study of the Himba, a tribe of nomadic pastoralists in Namibia, southern Africa [2].



Young Himba Woman

<https://bit.ly/3SI0oTv>

They found that people with similar mate values were more likely to enter into a relationship with each other, and they also had better relationship outcomes.

This is different to most research about desirability as it focuses on people's actions and less on their stated preference, which can be influenced by social pressures.

"Everyone knows each other and most date and marry within the population. You can ask them how much they'd like to be in a relationship with a specific person because they actually know that person. That's how people have been partnering up for thousands and thousands of years, not online, but with people in your community."

My View? There is probably something in this idea of pairing up with someone you have known >p.4

News Shorts

Good diet beats depression

Young men with a poor diet saw a significant improvement in their symptoms of depression when they switched to a healthy Mediterranean diet [3].

Say the researchers, "The diet was rich in colourful vegetables, legumes and whole-grains, oily fish, olive oil and raw, unsalted nuts.

"The focus was on fresh whole-foods while reducing the intake of 'fast' foods, sugar and processed red meat."

"We know food affects mood. For example, around 90% of the 'happy' chemical, serotonin is made by gut microbes. These in turn communicate to the brain via the vagus nerve, in what is called the gut-brain axis." See: **Gut Bugs affect behavior, mood, brain**; [Jan 2017](#) [4].

My View? Over the years we have seen many aspects of how gut bugs affect mood: **Terrible Twos/Gut Bug Link**, [July 2015](#) [5]; **Gut Bugs affect behavior, mood, brain**, [Jan 2017](#) [6]

Of course, other factors play a role in mood, too, including green spaces, anti-inflammation, sunshine, expanses of water, and awe & wonder; see **Brain Health**, [Deadly Harvest](#), [Ch 9](#), p.251.

Alzheimer's Lifestyle Links

Studies are piling up to reinforce the principle that Alzheimer's is a lifestyle disease. Brief references:

Exercise protects brain volume

People with the most physical activity had a 10 cc more grey matter in their brains compared to people with the least amount of physical activity [7].

>p4

Questions

Mate Attraction & success rate

Q. In Strong Immune System is Attractive, [May 2022](#), you write:

"The evidence is piling up that we are indeed programmed to detect 'fitness for purpose' in a prospective mate."

Try walking up and down any high street- the rule is clearly "for every Jack- his Jill!" If only "attractive" people found mates, there would be an awful lot more singletons out there.

Anyway- how much choice has there ever been in traditional societies where family and rank were- still are- the main determinants of marriage?

A. The article was about detecting strong immune systems – but even if you can detect it, it doesn't mean that you get what you want! So most couples end up with what is possible, not the ideal.

Anyway as you point out, there are many other factors involved in 'attractiveness' and I made reference to some of them in the [May](#) article.

Finally we are not talking about historical and 'traditional societies', where considerations of 'family and rank' predominate; rather they refer to the situation over eons in forager bands.

In [Marriage, Deadly Harvest, Chapter 8](#) [8], page 211, I describe how the first marriage of a forager adolescent would indeed often be negotiated by parents. But since foragers practiced serial polygamy, where most men and women would have some 5 or 6 marriages in a lifetime, the subsequent several marriages would be based on the desires of the couple involved. Finally, as Darwin argued, a very slight advantage conferred by a particular ability, however minuscule, when repeated over thousands of generations, gets amplified into something measurable. More experimentation will tell if this particular study was measuring something tangible.

News Shorts

Gut bugs, Western diet, Bowel cancer



Dame Deborah James (1 Oct 1981 – 28 June 2022) was an English journalist and charity campaigner. In 2016, she was diagnosed with incurable bowel cancer and went on to host the **You, Me and the Big C** podcast on BBC Radio 5 about her struggles with her illness.

How can bowel cancer have struck down an apparently healthy woman at the young age of 40?

We have no idea what lifestyle Deborah led but the western diet, rich in processed and red meat (mammal meat), starches, sugars, and anti-nutrients (like gluten), has often been fingered. See: **The Underrated Colon, Deadly Harvest, Ch 5** [9], p 114.

Now a study has found a causal link. It finds that the Western diet encourages the growth of a bacterium called "*pks⁺E. coli*" which causes cancerous **MUTATIONS** in bowel cells [10].

My View? Many people on a Western diet do **NOT** get bowel cancer so Deborah James seems to have been particularly unlucky.

Nevertheless, the message for all of us is that, for good colon health, live like nature intended and don't give "*pks⁺E. coli*" a chance to thrive.

Omega-3s lower blood pressure

A study of studies finds that those who have high blood pressure and who consume a minimum of 3g per day of omega-3 fish oils (DHA & EPA) have systolic blood pressure lowered by an average of about 4.5 mmHg.

The researchers go on to say that 3 g of fish oil is provided by about 4 oz (110 gram) of good quality salmon fillet. Other good sources

are the usual suspects: sardines, herring, mackerel, trout, and oysters.

For vegans, algae oil pills are a good source of DHA and EPA [11].

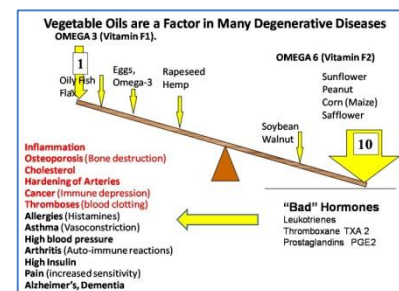
My View? So far so good. Even if a reduction of 4.5 mmHg might seem modest, omega-3 is a powerful hormone which affects a vast range of conditions – from reduced inflammation, swelling, and pain sensitivity to improved heart health, cholesterol, and bone building.

So this study reinforces our usual drumbeat: we all need to dramatically increase our intake of omega-3s.

But Pesky Omega-6s?

However this study, like so many others, completely ignores the critical role of omega-6s! These are the pesky vegetable oils (sunflower, safflower, corn, peanut etc.) which have come to dominate our diets just in my lifetime.

This is the problem: what good omega-3 can be immediately **UNDONE** by omega-6. This is the situation in Western diets with the see-saw terribly overbalanced towards the inflammation and other harms of omega-6. This is the diagram I use in my lectures:



<https://bit.ly/3Agl7qi>

So the message is: strip out omega-6 wherever you can and load up on your oily fish (or algae). And when you do this you probably won't need as much as 3g per day omega-3 anyway.

As for the experimental diet in this study, it seems to be a modified version of the Mediterranean diet. But, without the whole-grains and the legumes, full-on Paleo would be best.

Lager, alcoholic or not, helps gut bugs

Healthy men who drank 11 fluid ounces (33 cl) of either alcoholic or non-alcoholic lager with dinner for 4 weeks had an improved gut bug profile [12].

Their stools had greater bacterial diversity and higher levels of 'alkaline phosphatase', indicating an improvement in intestinal health

Alkaline phosphatase in the gut detoxifies harmful gut compounds and reduces inflammation (which can be a factor in IBS, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis [13].

My View? An unknown ingredient, in lager (not alcohol) seems to have this beneficial effect.

Just know that non-alcoholic beers, although they have, typically, only one third the calories of regular beer, they spike blood sugar just the same, so consume modestly.

The study was carried out on men but there is nothing to suggest that it would not work on women too. It is also probable that other (non-alcoholic) beers and ales will have similar benefits.

Bank Stools for Transplant later in Life

According to a team from Harvard Medical School, changes in the way that humans live and eat over the past few decades have resulted in tremendous alterations in the gut microbiome. These changes have been linked to increased rates of asthma, allergies, diseases of the digestive system, type 2 diabetes, and other conditions.

We have known for a long time that forager stools are significantly different to stools from those on a modern western lifestyle, notably diet, see: **Forager Stools**, [July 2016](#) [14]. The obvious remedy is to take forager stools and transplant them into westerners. See: **Fecal Transplants**, [March 2018](#) [15]. This process is dubbed 'rewilding' of the microbiome. However, this can give problems of compatibility and rejection.

Now the team proposes that we can resolve this difficulty by having individuals bank samples of their

own stools when they are young and healthy for use later in life in a stool transplant [16]. A process the researchers call 'rejuvenation'.

In this way using your own fecal transplant avoids problems of incompatibility. To this end, stool banks have sprung up which keep your stool samples deep-frozen for decades.

My View? This might have worked for those of my generation who were brought up frugally on war-time rations. But I doubt that the stools of young people of subsequent generations are any better than when they are old.

As always, we don't need to go to the extremes of transplanting stools. Just live like nature intended and have gut microbiota like nature intended!

Antibiotics wreak havoc on athletic performance

At least they do in mice [17]. Researchers found that by killing essential gut bacteria with a powerful cocktail of antibiotics, athletic mice lost 21% performance. More surprisingly they also lost **MOTIVATION**.

Say the researchers, "A casual exerciser wouldn't be affected much. But on a world-class athlete, a small setback can be much more magnified."

What is going on? The researchers speculate that microbes convert dietary fiber into energy – so if they aren't there, then neither is the energy.

Also the influence of the microbiome on mood is well documented, see: **Gut Bugs affect behavior, mood, brain**, [Jan 2017](#) [18]

My View? Antibiotics are a miracle drug and should be held in reserve for critical situations. See: **Miracle Drug Squandered**, [Oct 1999](#) [19].

Athletic performance aside, antibiotics do have other drawbacks and side effects: **Antibiotics Damage Cells**, [Aug 2013](#) [20]; **Antibiotics Fatten Kids**, [Jan 2016](#) [21]; **Antibiotics and Breast Cancer**, [Aug 2017](#) [22]; **Type I Diabetes and Antibiotics**, [Sept 2017](#) [23].

Need to Boost Muscle Strength

"Resistance" exercise to build muscle strength is important for health, but only one person in 20 aged 19 to 64 is meeting England's guidelines [24].

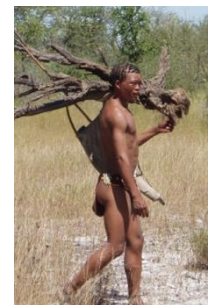
Strength training is defined as any activity that strengthens muscle or bone. Say the researchers: "Lifting barbells isn't the only way to strengthen muscles: combat sports, dance classes and circuit training are all forms of strength training."

"Age-related loss of muscle mass and skeletal muscle dysfunction are the cause of many chronic diseases. Every muscle contraction counts and even a 3-second muscle contraction daily can increase muscle strength."

My View? In forager life, men and women of all ages would, daily, be lugging around heavy loads.



[Enlarge](#) [25]



[Enlarge](#) [26]

Since most of us today do not walk around all day with toddlers or firewood on our shoulders we need to make up for it with muscle-building exercises.

See: **Importance of Load Carrying**, [Aug 2014](#) [27]; **Ageing Muscles: Hard To Build, Easy To Lose**, [Sept 2018](#) [28]. **From Strong Backs to Back Pain**, [Oct 2019](#) [29].

Resistance Exercise for Sleep

A resistance exercise group increased their sleep time from under 7 hours by up to 40 minutes after completing a muscle strength program [30].

The subjects completed their sets and repetitions on 12 resistance machines to work all the major muscle groups in a session. The machines included leg press, chest press, lateral pull-down, leg curl, leg extension, biceps curl, triceps

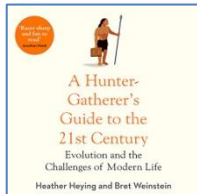
pushdown, shoulder press, abdominal crunch, lower back extension, torso rotation and hip abduction. Participants performed three sets of 8 to 16 repetitions at 50-80% of their one-repetition maximum.

My View? Phew! That regimen is really heavy duty and, in my view, far more than needed to conform to a Paleo lifestyle. For a more reasonable compromise, see previous article. But if it helps quality and length of sleep, have a go at this program!

Book Review – part V

Hunter-Gatherer's Guide to the 21stC

Heather Heying & Bret Weinstein



<https://bit.ly/3aBqBaf>

Last month we saw Heying & Weinstein describe how our outside brains are maladapted to the modern world and are prone to

confusion. Our civilizations are fragile and the challenge is to organize society in such a way that is future-proofed against collapse.

My View? Heying & Weinstein are strong on describing the mismatch between forager life and the modern world – and the pathologies that arise from that.

Their suggested remedies are less convincing. Yes, avoid getting sucked in by social media, get as close to nature as possible.

In particular avoid those zealots who are “ideologically obsessed” from imposing Utopian visions for engineering society by diktat from above. Such visions are “infantile” and murderous – as Pol Pot, Stalin, Chairman Mao, and Hitler have shown.

In an aside on Covid, they observe that this disease would never have gained a grip in forager society: Covid depends on enclosed spaces for its spread and anyone living like a forager, entirely out of doors, would be spared from infection.

Continued from Page 1

Good diet beats depression Physical Fitness lowers Dementia

A team found that a least fit person would reduce their risk of dementia by 33% if they became as fit as those in the fittest group [31].

Diabetes drives brain ageing

Type 2 diabetes caused 13.1% decreases in working memory, learning and flexible thinking, and brain processing speed compared to people without diabetes [32].

Continued from Page 1

Relationships best between those of similar desirability

... since infancy and have some kind of rapport with. On the other hand the study doesn't examine the phenomenon of serial polygamy which is the norm in hunter-gatherers, see: **Polygamy, Deadly Harvest, Chapter 8**, page 211; **Male-Female Pairing Evolved to lock in Male Protection for Kids, Sept 2014** [33].



Paleo in a Nutshell: Geoff's latest work encapsulates, concisely and easily, current thinking on living the way nature intended. www.paleo-nutshell.com



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