



## DIET FREE FROM HUMAN MANIPULATION

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Over the last two hundred years Medicine like all other disciplines of knowledge have made great strides for making the lives of human beings better and healthier and have discovered cures and remedies for the diseases that have plagued the human race for millennia. But with industrial and accompanying agricultural revolution, availability of food for masses became more widespread and cheaper than ever before. That led to overconsumption of food and the situation was more complicated by emancipation from hard labour for a sizable proportion of people as machines took over the work previously done by humans. People had much more to eat and had less work to do! So humans faced another conundrum, they were mostly protected from infectious diseases but started suffering from the so-called diseases of civilization like Diabetes, Hypertension, metabolic syndrome and plethora of related diseases like coronary artery disease, stroke, renal failure and many more!

In ancient times, much more emphasis was put on diet as a form of treatment and prevention. Father of Greek medicine Hippocrates said "Let food be thy medicine". An inscription in Egyptian pyramids reads "You live only on one quarter of what you eat, on other three quarters, your physician lives". Every major religion has enjoined upon its followers to exercise restraint in eating and has considered gluttony a vice even in those times when food was scarcely available. With all the revolutionary changes that came along modern medicine something was lacking. There was little or no consensus as to what should be the ideal human diet to ward off illnesses and improve longevity.

From Hunter Gatherer humans to discovery of agriculture around ten thousand years ago, human diet has changed conspicuously but with few exceptions animal food products were always there in the diet of humans in the form of milk and meat. Coronary artery disease was a rare occurrence before the advent of industrial revolution. Even up until second world war coronary artery disease was not the top killer of humans. After the war, the prevalence of Ischemic heart disease skyrocketed and scientists started looking for reasons of sudden rise in prevalence of and mortality due to Ischemic heart disease. Framingham Heart study was started in 1948 to look into the risk factors of coronary artery disease. The impetus to this research was given when president Dwight D. Eisenhower suffered a heart attack while in office. An American physiologist Ancel Keys came up with the cholesterol hypothesis based on his Seven Countries Study that implicated cholesterol derived from animal fats as the main culprit.<sup>1</sup> His hypothesis gained currency and animal fats were and are still considered bad for heart health. There

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has been a lot of criticism on his findings and the manner of study but his findings were made part of Dietary guidelines. An interesting example is The French Paradox: French are particularly well known for their excessive use of milk products but as compared to other countries they have had much lower incidence of coronary artery disease. A British physiologist John Yudkin in 1972 published a book "Pure, white and Deadly" and put the blame on excessive consumption of refined sugar and refuted the claims made by Ancel Keys.<sup>2</sup> Quite recently an American Pediatric Endocrinologist Dr Robert Lustig has been campaigning against the consumption of refined sugar as he thinks it is most important cause of metabolic syndrome and associated premature coronary artery disease.<sup>3</sup> In the preceding last two decades many physicians and individual researchers have been advocating the use of low carbohydrate ketogenic diets derived from animal fat and protein as a means of treatment and prevention strategy against diabetes and coronary artery disease. A Canadian nephrologist Dr Jason Fung needs particular mention about his work on the prevention and reversal of Diabetes with ketogenic diet and fasting.<sup>4</sup> Another man Dr Chris Knobbe, an American ophthalmologist and associate professor in University of Texas, has very compelling data about the link between industrial production and consumption of vegetable oils and opening of pandora box of these Diseases of Civilization.<sup>5</sup> But our current health system puts much more emphasis on treatment rather than prevention as it may be the underlying cause of no consensus among scientists and physicians about what the most healthful and wholesome human diet should be another important barrier to keep people from eating unhealthy foods is that they are addicted to them and can't resist given the widespread and round the clock availability. Food addiction is not only real but the biggest hurdle in effective treatment of patients. If people don't need to take pills or undergo surgery, pharmaceutical industry would be the biggest loser and they don't want this to happen at any cost. Moreover, it is not only the diet, lifestyle, mental health and many more factors play their role in the development of disease

Butter, cheese and margarine are used as source of energy and as part of different dishes and fast foods mostly to make them more palatable and tasty. Butter and cheese have a long history of human consumption. Butter is used in more societies than cheese which is used mostly in Middle East and West. In their pure unadulterated forms without any additives and preservatives they are a rich source of protein, fats and fat-soluble vitamins. Margarine is a rather new addition to human culinary use. In 1860's it was prepared as a cheap substitute for butter and cheese and it was basically butter with some additives but later on vegetable oil was the main source of fat in margarine preparations. When comparing these butter and cheese are more natural and a good source of essential nutrients, while margarine in its different preparations may be more delightful to our taste buds but in terms of nutritional value butter and cheese are much better! Any diet that is free from human manipulation to make it more palatable is always superior in nutritional value from the ones which are prepared by putting a lot of additives with no nutritional value. As James Joyce put it "God made food; the devil the cooks".

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