

## A Double Dose of Skepticism

I found the comments of Mr. Adler in his editorial “A Big Dose of Skepticism” in which he described complementary and alternative medicine as ‘something your hairdresser saw on Oprah’ as missing a very important point related to the present rising tide of chronic disease in the United States. As was stated in the March 17, 2005 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* the generation of children born today is likely to be the first generation in our country’s history to have a shorter life expectancy on average than their parents due to the rising tide of chronic disease.

There are no drugs or surgery randomized trials that have demonstrated the same magnitude of beneficial impact on chronic disease than can be achieved from diet and lifestyle changes. Yet these “common sense” approaches to combating the epidemic of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers such as those of the colon, breast and prostate may be considered as “complementary and alternative therapies” because they have not adequately been proven by Mr. Adler’s criterion of the double blind, randomized, long-term placebo controlled trials.

What a shame it would be if *Newsweek* readers would be prohibited from learning about advances in the understanding of how diet and its component nutrients, lifestyle and environment influence health and disease due to the lack of long-term, placebo-controlled, randomized trials. There are many who are respected as both basic science and clinical medical experts who feel that the ability to defeat the epidemic of age-related chronic disease will not come from the development of new pharmaceuticals or surgical procedures, but rather in understanding how to successfully apply personalized nutrition and lifestyle as first line therapies in both the prevention and management of chronic disease.

It would be my hope that in the future he would report on all significant discoveries that have demonstrated promise in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease regardless of whether they meet his rather limiting criterion of the double blind, placebo controlled trial which favors pharmaceutical intervention trials.

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