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C'mon, People!

On the football pre-game shows, ESPN has a segment called “C'mon Man”—some coaches or players do such dumb things, the commentators just have to shout “C'mon Man!” I like the concept, so I'm making it mine: starting today and every Wednesday, I'm going to expand the concept and call it “C'mon, People!” There are some things so outrageous said in print, on the Internet, and on television about health, fitness, weight loss, and more, that I just want to shout “C'mon, People!” I'll throw Urban Legends in this category as well. You may like it. You may not. But it's time to point out what's real and what's not in the plethora of health information you see and hear.

You know what frustrates me to no end? Magazines that give three sentences about a study to inform you about lifestyle changes you should make. Here's one. Title: *Jog Away Joint Pain* with a picture that shows a lean woman running up steps. Three sentences that say according to a new university study, exercise helps protect your joints even without weight loss. The lead author of the study said in one sentence how exercise reduces the number of molecules that break down cartilage in joints and cause pain. Makes you want to get out and start running no matter your size, doesn't it?

Except that this was an overfeeding study done on male mice. Researchers fed them all a high-fat diet for half their lives to help them get overweight, then put a running wheel in half the cages; apparently if mice get bored enough, they'll run on a wheel. (The same tendency has not been shown to occur in humans!) The overweight rats that ran on the wheel had less biochemical indicators of osteoarthritis than the ones that didn't get wheels. That's very nice for those mice. But how do you make the leap from male mice with access to a running wheel, and who've been made fat via diet, to recommending exercise as a way of reducing joint pain in human women with sore knees?

C'mon, People!

Are you a mouse? No??? Do you think everything that works in mice will work the same in humans? Maybe, maybe not, but I'm not recommending running for overweight humans with sore knees until I see a human trial, because everything I've learned so far says the tremendous forces generated on knees when running in an overweight body may make arthritis worse, not better.

If you want to hear more, click on the link. There are three more of these C'mon, People examples from this magazine alone.



What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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