

food and mood

The quarterly newsletter of the Food and Mood Project

Issue no. 10
Winter 2002/3

The big surprise finding in the Food and Mood Survey was that water drinking came tops as the self-help strategy most helpful to the emotional and mental health of survey participants. To investigate further why this might be, Food and Mood recently interviewed Martin Hum PhD DHD. Dr Hum has been a registered nutritional therapist for ten years and has a particular interest in the role of water in the body and the effects of low level dehydration.

Water works!

Interview with Dr Martin Hum

F&M: In the recent food and mood survey, 80% of the survey participants said that having more water was helpful or very helpful for their emotional and mental health. This apparent benefit could have been because they were automatically drinking less sugary or caffeine containing drinks and obtaining a benefit that way. However, please would you explain how you think just having more water could be helping these people's emotional/mental health.



DrH: Dehydration is a form of stress and any kind of stress causes the same physiological changes in the body. If it continues long-term, it can result in feelings of anxiety and depression. Remember that the brain is 85% water. It is the movement of water through microtubules in the nerve cells that generates the electrical activity in the brain. That is why the slightest shortage of water can affect brain function and why severe dehydration causes confusion, hallucinations and

eventually death. Even mild dehydration causes an increase in the production of histamine, which acts as a neurotransmitter in the brain and can disrupt the delicate balance of other neurotransmitters and hormones.

F&M: When people are unwell, taking supplements (if affordable) is often easier than changing what you eat. How important do you think it is that people rehydrate before doing this?

DrH: In explaining this, I often use the analogy of a garden, with the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

'Remember that the brain is 85% water. It is the movement of water through microtubules in the nerve cells that generates the electrical activity in the brain.'

FROM THE EDITOR



Since the autumn conference, the findings from the Food and Mood Survey have been generating significant media interest, with coverage in the Daily Telegraph, BBC news online and World Service, plus plenty of other local radio reports and magazine coverage. This issue of *Food and Mood* focuses on the surprise indication from the survey findings that the simple act of increasing the amount of water we drink could have a noticeable affect on how we think or feel. Therefore we are delighted to have been able to interview Dr Martin Hum, a specialist in the benefits of water-drinking. We also have a dramatic personal account, from the founder of the charity APRIL, as to what can happen when the importance of drinking water is overlooked. The letters pages contains some fascinating correspondence and there are ten Food and Mood tips written with a festive season 'spin'!

Finally, if you are looking for a good cause to donate to this festive season, the Food and Mood Project is currently in need of funds. The Project appears to be falling victim to its own success as, following a steadily growing awareness of the Project's work, administration (and other costs) also increase. We would welcome any donations you are able to make to help us keep afloat!

All good wishes,
Amanda Geary
Food and Mood Project Founder

In this issue

Water wisdom	1-3
Leading by example	4
Research bite:fish oil	4
Festive food.....	6
Letters	7
Homocysteine testing at home ..	8
Food and mood conference report.....	9