

# A glimpse into the autoimmune illness epidemic: how come my grandparents drank whiskey and ate lard and were healthier than me?

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## Commentary

The American medical system has long been revered around the world, with third world countries sending some of their most dire cases to our doctors for life saving procedures. Over the last century our scientific edge in research has been applauded; cardiovascular care, reconstructive surgery, and crisis management are our fortes. But, the United States health care system has lost its golden throne. Abysmally, our society's overall standard of health has plummeted to a weakly #38 on the World Health Organization statistics. Switzerland, Morocco and Malta exhibit a healthier population.

Multitudes of factors contribute to America's healthcare demise. Our food chain is polluted by GMO altered crops and tainted by chemical preservatives. The soils are leached and nuked with glyphosate (Roundup). Our children's endocrine system is over stimulated with growth hormones in their milk and animal products, bringing on menses too young and ballooning their body fat. The carbon footprints on our earth and skyline are vast. Antibiotics have been doled out far too leniently, making microbes stronger and more resistant. Bottled vitamins are synthesized chemicals. Vaccinations are laced with mercury and toxic preservatives. We swim in a frightening swarm of escalating electro-magnetic radiation fields, and sadly our contemporary physicians are trained primarily in how to be "dashboard light doctors," angling to fix what is visibly broken or bleeding or seriously wounded.

Long gone is the family doctor with good "horse sense", able to lance a boil at the kitchen counter or ease a postpartum mother through the baby blues with an herbal tonic and a good homespun supply of moral support. The tickling cough versus the croupy cough called for horsehound syrup or a mustard plaster; now all coughs are suppressed with Robitussin PM.

Our science-minded medical schools produce marvellous surgeons and specialists attuned to weaselling out organ malfunction, but they are not good generalists. It is a rare American physician who practices non-pharmaceutical-based medicine. The pill-and-procedure are relied upon heavily, as each specialist trains his or her eye to the "dashboard light" symptom to alert them to malfunctions, in their brief 10minute exam time with you.

Stroke, broken bones, appendicitis, hernia, miscarriage, traumatic injury, and brain tumors are glaring and obvious-our physicians' modern pharmaceuticals and procedures can tend to them lickety-split. For this we are grateful.

But, the mysterious symptoms-the migrating joint pains, the lunar migraines, the constellation of neck pain and bellyaches with insomnia and arrhythmias-befuddle our modern-day American doc. The ability to corral several multi-systemic symptoms together and recognize

inflammation as the root cause, or food intolerance, or maybe a mineral deficiency is not gleaned. These sensical pieces get glossed over since pharmacology is now the mainstay in medical schools. United States Americans are supposed to be healthy and able and robust. But, how can trans-fat laced foods and fluoridated, chlorinated water, and encapsulated schoolrooms, bathing our children in an airless fluorescent light spectrum breed wholesome or homemade?

Somehow, we aim to rear vibrant, inquisitive children, even with their thyroid function at half pace from fluoridation and their curious minds dulled down by dioxin fumes reeking from cleaning solvents in the hallways. Tally in the non-nutritive sugars and white flour, decreased gym classes for endorphin production and cardiovascular conditioning, and our children are allergy-riddled, diabetic, and learning-disabled in far greater proportions than their parents were at the same age.

The average adult American is 30 pounds overweight, dependent on coffee and sugar for energy, and living in a ceaseless frenzy of work, home, commuting and chores. The scenario is one of disharmony, imbalance, lack of nourishment, and a bleak future unless you choose to take personal control to change your lifestyle.

My grandparents lived to their late 80s and 90s, and they ate bacon and butter, drank whiskey, and smoked. Because they were born in the 1890s, they didn't consume hydrogenated oils until they were 50years old, nor did they eat fruit out of season, sprayed with preservatives and ripening agents. They had homemade bread, cooked with lard, and played gin rummy and laughed like school-kids every Sunday, enjoying life and family time, beach days, and a much slower pace of living. Smoking wasn't good for them of course, but the carcinogens in the cigars they smoked were more easily handled because their nutrient levels were so much higher, due to the non-processed, local foods, and their stress quotient and cortisol regulation much more normalized. Their immune function was strong enough to handle a noxious agent or natural lipid from butter.

My mother was less healthy than her mom, and died of cancer at age 68. I battled chronic Lyme disease for a decade in my 40s. I

can't help but believe my grandmother would have had an easier time recovering than I did. I was a 1960s kid raised on DTD misting, fishsticks and soda pop, and my Long Island neighbourhood was on the nuclear power plant's radiation sweep. These potent chemicals, the lifestyle choices, and increasing smog levels likely killed my fine-boned, elegant mother too early, and junked up my liver and stressed my immune capabilities and adrenal glands enough so that when the aggressive *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria of Lyme disease entered my body, I was ill-equipped to defend myself from its invasive, multi-systemic effects. My genetic predisposition tainted my mitochondria function to collapse into Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The infection depleted my essential fatty acids and induced neurological problems and fibromyalgia, while simultaneously inflaming my intestinal mucosal lining with Irritable Bowel Syndrome. My fast-paced lifestyle, and dominant cortisol production, threw fuel on the inflammatory, infectious fire. This was a far cry from my hard-working grandparents who worked twelve-hour days on their feet in the delicatessen and coffee shop, but also ate only homemade foods and read the paper barefoot in their backyard every summer evening.

Dozens of gastroenterologists, neurologists, and endocrinologists could not weave together my symptom constellation, and instead scoffed a formerly athletic, outdoorsy individual like me as "perimenopausal" and too anxious, prescribing an ever-more-pricey migraine drug. Rather than seeking a way to rebuild my system, they recommended Prednisone for my unending five years of IBS. In a wheelchair and weeping at my seventeenth visit to my acclaimed neurologist, I pleaded for help; why was I too weak to walk or shampoo my hair unassisted, with foot-drop MS-like symptoms scaring me and these weekly migraine sieges torrential and incapacitating? How come every six months I was worsening and more weird symptoms emerging? What could he do? Who could cure me?

"I have no clear answers for you, Katina. We should try an anti-seizure medication for the migraines. Maybe that will help you?"

In shock, I did not want to take Topamax, with its numerous side effects, and be doped out in even deeper malaise than my malfunctioning brain and body already were. "Do you know another doctor who would understand why my body is failing at age 47?"

Inside my core, I knew this man had no "horse sense." He could not connect the dots between my multi-systemic mystery, and he was dismissing me. I nodded in sheer discouragement, feeling massively let down by this famed doctor and our medical system. My boyfriend wheel chaired me to the car, my fogged mind layered in a gauzy film and my spirit plummeting down a funnel of despair.

How could a talented homeopath like me, with an 85 percent success rate in my formerly successful office, gain absolutely no direction or relief from these world-class medical greats in their temples of technology and laboratories? I was crushed, and rightfully so. This experience left me devastated, and clearly at rock bottom. Strangely, I was not alone. Eventually "dumped" in the autoimmune illness bucket, like 50million Americans have been, I discovered my story rang true to many. And, amazingly I made a 100% recovery!

Many of you can regain significant levels of wellness, like me. The important step is looking beyond managing the symptoms with palliative medications to get to the underlying predisposing issues. Integrative Medicine, Naturopathic Physicians, and Functional Medicine doctors are finally gaining a foothold in our lopsided 'dashboard light' doctoring system, looking beyond suppressing an immune reaction in overdrive to what created that response?

Do you have heavy metal accumulation? Could you have food sensitivities and be eating the aggravating ingredients to trigger soaring inflammation? Is your liver burdened and loaded with solvents like glyphosate or tetra-hydro-chloride (dry cleaning agent)? Are you an individual who carries a tick-borne disease infection (Lyme, babesia, etc.)? So many factors contribute to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Bell's Palsy, Lupus, and many chronic diseases, that can be worked with. We must understand that the United States has grown into a fast-paced, toxin-laden, chemically tainted culture with more increasing velocity every decade after World War II.

What we find in 2017 is a staggeringly illness-ridden populace, with a relatively small number of Integrative Medicine doctors and Natural Medicine practitioners available who understand the full scope of the dynamics of whole-being treatment. We have gotten way off kilter. Let's gain some perspective and help you regain some control over your own body and health. You have enormous inner healing resources to tap into. They are called resiliency, willpower, creativity, belief, devotion, and intention. And, becoming your own patient self advocate is key.

- i. Seek an Integrative Medicine, Functional Medicine, Naturopathic Physician, and Certified Clinical Nutritionist for case review on inflammation and autoimmune illnesses.
- ii. Have this practitioner get your vitamin, mineral, fatty acids, amino acids tested for depletions.
- iii. Insist that you are tested for tick borne microbes not at the commercial local lab but ONLY at the state of the art IgeneX Labs, Palo Alto, CA. The 40year old ELISA test is outdated and 70% inaccurate.
- iv. Have your genetic markers for dis-ease predispositions run for 'snips' at 23andMe (this will help determine flaws in your detoxification paths, mitochondria dysregulation, viral tendencies)
- v. Clean up your diet- eliminate sugars (cane, fructose, corn syrup), wheat, and eat ONLY organic animal products (dairy, meats, poultry)
- vi. Sunshine, fresh air and daily exercise are mandatory!

We are intricate, complex and essentially self righting human beings. With the appropriate nutritive supports and detox measures, much can be accomplished to help the adrenal glands recalibrate and the immune system rebalance, bringing more comfort and vitality back to your life. In time, like our grandparents you can even toast them with a swig of whiskey!!

## Biography

Katina I. Makris, CCH, CIH is host of "Lyme Light Radio", author of "Out of The Woods, Healing Lyme Disease, Body, Mind & Spirit" and "The Autoimmune Illness & Lyme Disease Recovery Guide, Mending Body, Mind & Spirit" published by Helios Press. Keynote Speaker of The Ticked off Music Series, Lyme disease educator, Classical Homeopath and Certified Spiritual Healer, Finalist US Book News Award in Alternative Health Winner "Top 50 Authors You Should Be Reading. The Author's Show. Katina is a graduate of Duke University and The Stillpoint School of Integrative Life Healing. She sat on the board of the Council for Homeopathic Certification for 7years.

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