

## Notes on Diabetes Thanet zoom meeting 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Brian skipped the welcome to new participants since no new people were with us at the start, though Andrew Nash joined us a bit later.

Jeremy started his presentation "It's not your fault: Part 3 The Food Environment and Addiction". He said 'This presentation covers how the food environment does not work in our favour and for many it leads to food addiction and type 2 diabetes, obesity, and many other chronic health problems.' He showed a picture of a hospital food aisle packed with sugary chocolate bars and sweets, used by Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall in his campaign to stop such unhealthy items being sold in hospitals.

Jeremy then pointed out that the British Medical Journal reported in 2017 that the food industry spends 27 times more money on advertising than the government spends on healthy eating! For example, the 2012 Olympics were partly sponsored by McDonalds and Coco Cola. When government tried to regulate junk food advertising on TV before 9pm the food industry claimed it was a nanny state.

Next, he defined ultra-processed food as 'highly convenient (ready-to-eat), highly palatable, highly profitable, due to low-cost ingredients, and therefore of great importance to the food industry', and linked the increase in its consumption with the increase in obesity and chronic diseases. A 2018 report<sup>1</sup> said 'in UK we get 57% of our calories from ultra-processed food, and 65% of the sugar we eat comes from processed foods'. He went on to tell us about a doctor who went on a 4 week diet of ultra-processed foods and gained 6.5Kg, and his brain scans showed the reward centres had changed, and he retained his addiction to such foods even four weeks after returning to his healthy diet!

He then compared the food addiction scenario with the tobacco industry, which continued to claim tobacco was non-addictive for years after scientists (and themselves) had proof it was highly addictive. One of its major producers, Philip Morris, is now also the owner of Heinz and uses the same strategies to make people addicted to their unhealthy products<sup>2</sup>. Other food scientists have proved sugar is a psychoactive drug.

Jeremy went to on assert that 'Everything in Moderation' is terrible advice – people with the highest diet diversity had a 120% higher waist circumference than those with little diet diversity. Prevalence of food addiction increased with BMI. Adolescents with food addiction reported significantly higher depressive and anxiety symptoms and a lower quality of life and self-esteem.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ultra-processed foods and excessive free sugar intake in the UK: 2018 Fernanda Rauber et al

<sup>2</sup> Dr Joan Ifland Processed Food Addiction Foundations, Assessment and Recovery

<sup>3</sup> Analysis by Dr Jen Unwin and Dr David Unwin Food addiction and mental health in adolescents: a systematic review

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Jeremy ended with 3 foods to avoid - Seed oils / spreads, Refined grains and Sugar and 3 to eat - Meat and fish, Eggs and Fresh veg. He also recommended a book by Dr Robert Lustig 'Metabolical The truth about processed food and how it poisons people and the planet', and a book by Dr Jen Unwin 'Fork in the road - a helpful guide to food freedom'. On a personal note, Jeremy said "For myself decades of processed food did me no good, and not all damage has been reversible. The damage was insidious, building up slowly over the years. I only realised the problem in my late sixties. I can be grateful that 4 years ago I changed what I ate. It's never too late".

Brian kicked off the discussion with a question he would like to pose to public - "Are you addicted to food?". He wondered how many honest answers he would get. Jeremy suggested we check out YFAS (The Yale Food Addiction Scale) for a survey related to food addiction. Brian asked the attendees if they would answer such a survey and most agreed they would. Jeremy offered to provide a survey we could use. Brian noticed Andrew Nash, a new attendee, and welcomed him to the group. Alicia wondered if anyone had seen a TV programme the day before about a very overweight man, Paul Mason, who is one of the world's heaviest. Currently he is still addicted to the wrong foods, even after losing a lot of weight. She said that she reacts very badly if she eats any carbs at all, and mainly eats at home since restaurants are too dangerous. Brian says his wife tries to keep him on the straight and narrow when he tries to stray and eat potatoes or the like.

Brian moved on to his problems with his GP concerning glyceride. The GP took it off his prescription and Brian then started getting high blood sugar readings. Eventually the GP put him onto another drug, Trajenta (linagliptin), which has had no noticeable effect on the readings. The GP told him that glycerides have bad effects on the pancreas and the USA is likely to block its use. Brian and Brad have so far failed to find out if this is true. These drugs stimulate the production of insulin, and are linked with hypos, though Brian had never had one. Brian also told us the metformin is widely detected in sea water, especially after sewage is released into the sea. Some of the group did take metformin.

Brad then gave us details of beetroots and courgettes. Beetroots help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, are good for the eyes, boost natural immunity and encourage weight loss. Courgettes have similar benefits. Alicia said both were no-no's for type 1 diabetics. Brian recommends the book 'What to eat and how to eat it' by Renee Elliott.

Brian asked the group to assist with boosting the group by writing short testimonials stating how valuable it, so they can be used to promote the group.

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Andrew then told us of his problems keeping to the Keto diet, and admitted he had eaten half a pack of ginger biscuits during the meeting! He said his Hb1C blood sugar reading is 123 with a BMI of 32. He has had diabetes for 20 years or so, but currently he is trying Slimming World to lose weight. Brian recommended him the book John used to lose weight 'The Blood Sugar Diet' by Michael Mosley. Jeremy asked if it was a low-calorie diet but John confirmed it was a low carb diet, which helped him lose 22 Kg over 6 months or so, with the diabetes readings much lowered after a couple of months. Brian noted that ideally diabetics have a fully supportive partner to help them stick to their regimes. He also asked if the group could print out our flyer and get their GP to put them up in their surgery. It is on the website in the Links folder, but will be included with the email to the group.

Attendees were: Brian, Brad, Jeremy, John, Alicia, Maxine, Anne and Andrew.

Next meeting is 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 5pm via Zoom.

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