

Health & Science



Film Documentary Reveals Tuberculosis History



The People's Plague: Tuberculosis In America, premiering Monday, October 2, 1995 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS, is an entertaining and informative two-hour documentary by Diane Garey and Lawrence R. Holt that chronicles the history of tuberculosis, a disease that has shaped much of our modern public health policy, and explores the implications of the resurgence of the disease today. The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, (formed in 1904, later renamed the American Lung Association) launched the first full-scale, single-disease crusade ever. (Far left photo, circa 1930) the anti-tuberculosis campaign that spanned decades tested millions of Americans for TB. (Top right photo, circa 1920s) Children marched in parades and pageants to make the public aware of the disease. In the absence of a cure for tuberculosis, prevention and treatment often took curious and even outrageous forms. (Bottom right photo, circa 1935) By far the most remarkable and pervasive of these was the sanatorium movement. The "sans" were part hospital, part hope -- where thousands of those who could afford it sought "the cure" in fresh air and restful surroundings. The *People's Plague: Tuberculosis in America*, a production of Florentine Films, is a presentation of WMHT Educational Telecommunications, Albany, New York. (Photos: top/ American Lung Association; bottom/ The Albuquerque Museum)

25th Anniversary CELEBRATION of The Portland Observer

Study Points To Benefits Of Exercise

Overweight men have to exercise more than previously thought to lose weight and women need to exercise longer than men, according to a preliminary study by U.S. Agriculture Department researchers.

Men who are portly burn less fat during exercise than their lean counterparts, say the findings published in the August edition of *Agricultural Research* magazine.

The work is part of a continuing project to determine the relationship between amounts of stored body fat and fat burning rates during and after exercise. Most current exercise data are based on college athletes, said nutrition researcher Nancy Keim.

"We need to develop recommendations suited to overweight people," she said.

Keim, with two colleagues, found women needed to work out about twice as long as the men to burn 300 calories, a target recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine for weight loss. But other studies have suggested that women burn more fat than men

for a given level of exercise so Keim said more research is needed in this area.

"I don't really think that the actual truth is known yet."

Clearly exercise in combination with eating less will help people lose weight but exercise may not produce as much weight loss as anticipated. "We found in men that their body composition seem to play a role in how much fat they use while they exercise," Keim said.

The study, conducted at the Western Human Nutrition Research Center in San Francisco, put 32 male and 32 female volunteers through a series of five-minute workouts on a stationary bike.

The data was used to calculate the number of calories and calories derived from fat that the subjects would have burned if the sessions had extended half an hour.

Elite athletes were excluded from the tests. Fitness levels ranged from average to good and included volunteers who were slightly below to as much as 40 percent above their desired weight.

Lavender Makes For Sweet Dreams

Lavender, which was used to perfume the baths and underwear of the Romans and employed for at least 1,000 years in various folk remedies, may help older people overcome insomnia, a small study suggests.

The researchers, who reported the findings in the current issue of *The Lancet*, a medical journal, noted that doctors often prescribed powerful hypnotic drugs for older patients with insomnia. They said the drugs could have serious side effects and were often prescribed for long periods, even though they were recommended for only short-term use.

Dr. David Stretch of the Greenwood Institute of Child Health at the University of Leicester in England and his colleagues tested whether lavender oil could replace drug treatment for insomnia in older people. Previous pharmacological and animal studies showed lavender oil to have a light sedative effect.

Four geriatric patients in a nursing home, three of whom had been on tranquilizers for one to three years and one who had received no previous medication, were tested by measuring their sleep for six weeks.

For the first two weeks, measurements were taken while the patients used their regular medication. In the next two weeks, patients were removed from medication. And in the last two weeks, the patients' ward was perfumed with the scent of lavender by using a diffuser and lavender oil.

"To our slight surprise we found that there might be something after all to the old wives' tales," Stretch said. The results suggest that although removing medication significantly reduced the number of hours spent asleep, the use of the odor of lavender returned the time spent asleep to that obtained through medication. Patients were also found to be less restless during sleep.

Stretch emphasized that the study was preliminary and that further research would be required to determine the effectiveness of lavender. The researchers plan a more formal study using lavender in a variety of groups, including young children with sleep problems.



Willie E. Gary (center), a Florida attorney, is among 550 major corporations participating in the Corporate Agency Network, Inc. "Wings of Justice," which offers cancer patients empty seats on privately-owned aircrafts. In many cases, medical insurance almost never covers travel costs, which can add up quickly when a patient has to seek treatments monthly or even weekly.

Minorities Face Greater Health Care Risk

Blacks and Hispanics face greater risk than other population groups for chronic illness and premature death due to a lack of access to health care, a new study said.

The report released by the Joint Center for Political Economic Studies found that nearly one in four blacks and more than one in three Hispanics did not have health insurance in 1993, compared with about one out of six whites.

Low income blacks and Hispanics were also less likely to get routine medical care than whites in similar income brackets.

The report "underscores the importance of considering the needs of racial and ethnic minority groups as the nation's health care system continues to undergo rapid change," said Eddie Williams, president of the center.

"On balance, it is as important to increase access to care as it is to curb costs," he added.

The center drew on research by the Commonwealth Fund and Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health to examine health problems and access to health care.

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