Dangers of Modern Life

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http://www.living-systems.org/why/modern-life/

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Worsening Rates of Autism, Cancer and Other Diseases

If modern life presented no dangers to health, we would have a civilization where people are born, live and die without unpleasant, degenerative diseases in between birth and death.

My personal vision for humanity is that this can and should be accomplished, as a new standard of living for future generations. The Living Systems Method (LSM) sets out the tools to achieve this, by explicitly basing itself on the science of living systems. This is, in other words, the science of how to help ourselves, since we are all living systems.

Alas, our civilization is not yet one free of degenerative diseases. What, then, are the dangers of modern life which are responsible?

If the causes of disease were truly understood and resolved, and if the billions of dollars of medical research were being spent correctly, then people would be getting healthier rather than sicker, with each year that passes. So, are they? A simple analysis shows that the answer is no, and that modern medical research has so far failed us where it counts. The rate of many serious, degenerative diseases is increasing at an alarming, unexplained rate. By way of introduction, I will therefore start with some numbers, which speak for themselves. Here are the current ratios of occurrence of the following small sampling of diseases:

- Autism 1:48
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- Diabetes 1:4
- Obesity 1:3
- Major Depression 1:2
- Cancer 1:2
- Heart Disease 1:3 deaths
- Cognitive Decline 100%

With this in mind, I will first pause and consider the grand question of “WHY?”

Why have diseases like those listed above risen at such an alarming rate in recent decades, and why are they still continuing to rise?

In considering this fundamental question, I will then present LSM as a revolutionary new approach to healthy living in modern times, in a series of articles building on this one.

Why Are Many Diseases On the Rise?

Everyone and their uncle thinks they have the answer, but I would like to pose a simple, irrefutable analysis which can help cut through a lot of incorrect answers, and hone in on root causes more effectively.

It is reasonable to suppose that there must be one or more factors in modern life which are different to those which our ancestors had to suffer. For millions of years, human beings lived relatively free of modern, degenerative diseases like those listed above. They had different problems.

So, let us consider some possibilities.

Is It Due to Emotional or Physical Stress?

Could it be that people nowadays are more stressed? Is stress the reason? Perhaps the true cause of modern disease rates is emotional? I am sure you know people who claim this. I have heard it claimed by many people. Yet I will show why this cannot be the root cause.

In olden times, lives were often cut short by infection or toil. Let’s face it, for most of our ancestors life was hard.

For a start, can you imagine how emotionally traumatic it must have been for the average parent to lose several children before they even became adults? It was normal for this to be the case.

I will take the family of the famous 18th century composer J S Bach as an example. Let us consider how stressful life might have been for him.

Even though he is now remembered as one of the greatest musical geniuses of history, Bach was not recognized as such during his lifetime, but was considered second-rate, with other composers such as Telemann being far more esteemed, even though few people nowadays know who Telemann was.
Bach died his manuscripts were divided amongst his children, some of which were lost because not much was thought of them. About a century later, when Mendelssohn discovered the only surviving copies of some of Bach’s manuscripts being used to wrap meat in a butcher’s shop, and managed to save them, many of his contemporaries considered him an old-fashioned loon for liking Bach’s work.

As a child, Bach was forbidden access to any music manuscript paper, due to the expense, so he would creep downstairs at night to steal pages down from a high shelf and practise copying out pieces of music, at risk of punishment. Before he reached the age of 11, the young Bach lost both of his parents. At the age of 22, he married his first wife, Maria, and they had 7 children, of whom only 4 survived into adulthood. At the age of 35, Bach returned from a roadtrip to find that Maria had unexpectedly died in his absence, and had already been buried before his return. Later he married his second wife Anna, and together they had 13 children, of whom only 6 survived into adulthood.

For most people living nowadays, this would be considered an exceptionally emotionally traumatic life story. Yet Bach lived a relatively long life for his time period, dying at the age of 65, and even then only due to iatrogenesis, i.e., side effects of an eye operation he received.

I know that this is only one man’s life history. However, I decided to share it in detail in the hopes that you will find it memorable, as I have done, in clearly illustrating the basic observation that anyone who claims there are more chronic diseases nowadays due to “stress” or due to “emotional causes” is not being logical.

Life is emotionally stressful now, and has always been. If anything, it could be argued that our ancestors had more emotional stress than we do, but certainly the argument that we have more emotional stresses than they did doesn’t hold water.

As to physical stress, once again it could be argued that our ancestors had far more physical stress and toil than many people do nowadays, or at least that they were as stressed as we are, but it would not be logical to propose that we in general have MORE stress than they did.

**Then It Must Be For Genetic Reasons?**

With the emphasis placed on genetic research nowadays, anyone would think that it must be our genes that are responsible for the illnesses of modern life.

Clearly this is not the case, though, since the epidemic rise of many degenerative diseases in recent decades has happened so quickly that there has not been time for genetic changes to account for it. In fact, the problem is that due to other factors that are making us sick, we have not had time to adapt; our genes are trailing behind.

The field of epigenetics has sprung up, with exciting research indicating that it is not so much our genetic material that causes diseases, as epigenetic factors which activate or inactivate various genes. Think of the genes like a switch which for millions of years did not cause these sweeping epidemics of modern disease, and which is suddenly being “switched on” by modern causative factors. These causative factors are clearly not the genes themselves.
Why, then, is medical research so gene-centric? I know this will sound cynical, but the unavoidable conclusion is financial motives. The mapping of the human genome was something that pharmaceutical companies – answerable to profit-hungry shareholders – looked forward to, because with it came the prospect of patenting many new profitable drugs. However, whether all this genetic research has anything to do with the true causes of disease or not is not a question anyone dares to ask, since who would be a party-pooper?

**Then How About Diet – Perhaps That Is the Reason?**

A better argument can be made for diet, since here, unlike in the previous examples considered, we actually have a factor which has fundamentally changed in recent times.

Weston A Price brilliantly documented the health changes which followed the introduction of modern diets, in terms of processed foods. As one of the many examples he wrote about during the 1920s, residents of a remote Swiss village showed healthy facial bone structure, dental health and general health until a road was built connecting the village to the rest of society. After the road was built, a local shop was set up, to sell supplies brought in from outside, consisting of many types of processed foods. Following this, the facial bone structure, dental health and general health all significantly declined in the villagers. This was one of many such examples in Weston A Price’s work, spanning several continents where he studied traditional versus modern diets.

It is reasonable to suppose that diet may be playing a role in the development of modern disease rates, and that it may be a key role. However, it is also reasonable to suppose that this is not in itself the most important factor, or at least that there have since been even worse factors involved, given that the worst increases in disease rates have happened since the 1990s, whereas the introduction of modern diets had already largely taken place many generations before that. Arguably the excesses of the food industry have got even worse in recent years, but not to such a dramatic degree that on its own would account for the dramatic rise of diseases in this time period, compared to previous time periods.

This therefore leads me on to ask my main question: what exactly are the dangers of modern life which have become more prevalent since the 1990s? If we can identify some key suspects, then we may be closer to identifying the root causes of these disease epidemics.

**Disease Factors On the Rise Since the 1990s**

Here is a partial list of some examples of disease factors which have been on the rise since the 1990s. I will consider the degree of potential harm of each factor afterwards, but first let us draw up a list of key contenders:

- **Mercury and other heavy metals**: These are on the rise because it has been established that each generation passes its own mercury body burden on to the next generation, due to mercury being a retentive, bioaccumulative poison, which readily crosses the placental barrier, with the same applying to other metals as well, such as lead. This means that most of what goes in, doesn’t come out. What, then, goes in? Unfortunately, each generation has been delivered significant amounts of mercury, via gradual, long-term exposures including mercury dental fillings, vaccine
preservatives and other sources. And whatever does come out (e.g. in the crematorium) usually goes straight back into the environment, with each year increasing the mercury levels in our food, water and air.

- **Radioactive toxins:** Some countries have seen a proliferation of the nuclear power industry, alongside many leaks involving contamination of the global environment with radioactive toxins, including famous examples such as Fukushima and Chernobyl, as well as many less famous or unreported incidents. As with mercury, here we have another bioretentive category of poisons that accumulates in our environment, potentially entering our food and water supplies. Thankfully, at least dentists have not been filling our teeth with it. They made do with the second most poisonous element (mercury), rather than using the most poisonous one (plutonium). I apologize for jesting about a matter which is, alas, a matter of scientific fact.

- **Chemical toxins:** Pesticides and thousands of other chemicals with very little toxicology data or safety research having been conducted have filled our daily environment in trace quantities, and little is known about the cumulative, synergistic health effects.

- **Electrosmog:** From the 1990s onwards, we saw the rolling out of the cellular phone industry, by now blanketing almost the entire landmass of the globe in microwave radiation, in a mass uncontrolled experiment, of which little is known about the end outcomes, except that thousands of studies have documented health effects of microwave radiation including DNA breaks, diabetes, cancers, hormone deficiencies, immuno-suppression and increased mercury leakage from dental fillings.

- **Modern medicine:** Side effects caused by correctly prescribed medications have caused “medicine” to shoot up to the top of the list of causes of death in the USA, significantly outnumbering the nearest contenders such as cancer and heart disease – and this is only a consideration of correctly prescribed medications! Beyond this, there is great controversy over the extent of damage which may have been caused to modern populations from diverse medical practices such as, to name three examples: the use of mercury amalgams to fill teeth; the use of large numbers of concurrent vaccinations with toxic additives and in babies under 2 years old; and the over-use of antibiotics, undermining immune health.

### Which Are the Most Harmful to the 5 Key Organ Systems?

Finally, let us weigh up the above list from a systems point of view. Which of these factors holds the greatest potential to harm living systems? The answer is: those which specifically harm what I call the 5 Key Organ Systems. These are the organ systems which play the most important role in enabling a living system to self-manage intelligently: immune, elimination, endocrine, neurological and digestive. Any pernicious factors capable of harming these will do the most harm, compared to other pernicious factors. And if a pernicious factor harms all 5 at once, then this will top the list.

All of the examples listed above hold the potential to do great harm to the 5 Key Organ Systems. This means that they are all reasonable contenders for being the main causes of modern disease epidemics. However, the one which has been most extensively documented to exhibit toxic effects on all of the 5 Key Organ Systems is heavy metals, and especially mercury. This means that from a scientific point of view, mercury tops the list as the most concerning candidate.

Having said that, though, what we observe in clinical practice is that multiple disease causes are normally involved, including these and others. Most disease states have been multi-factorial in origin.
In my next article I will lay this out for you more systematically, with my diagram of The 7 Root Causes of Disease.