Fat Chance by Dr Robert Lustig - Science-Based or Speculation?

David Driscoll December 28, 2012

Dr Robert Lustig's viral YouTube video "Sugar: The Bitter Truth" firmly lays the blame for many modern disease epidemics on sugar and more specifically fructose. His new book about to be released entitled "Fat Chance - Beating the Odds against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease' it relies heavily on science to support its contentions. Although it would seem that many scientists claim that Dr Lustig is overstating the evidence in framing sugar as the main culprit!

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Newswire.net - December 28, 2012 - In the never ending search for a simple cure to overweight and obesity, one suspect that has been gaining an increasingly negative profile is sugar, and more specifically fructose. Dr Robert Lustig of UCSF has been the main champion of this campaign, with his 90 minute video entitled Sugar: The Bitter Truth getting viewed over 3 million times in just over three years on YouTube!

Now Dr Lustig has penned a book called "Fat Chance - Beating the Odds against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease" which has just been released in Hardback and is about to be launched on the kindle in the coming days for just over $15!

One of the most compelling parts of Dr. Robert Lustig's campaign against sugar is his credentials and his explanations of complex biochemistry coupled with a wealth of scientific research. The research and his interpretations of it have been carried on numerous media outlets including 60 Minutes.

But, although Dr. Lustig's message seems compelling to lay people, it seems that his scientific colleagues aren't so supportive of his views. In fact at a Sugar Symposium organised by the American Society for Nutrition at the Experimental Biology meeting held this year, Dr Lustig and several other key researchers were given the opportunity to present their views on the science in what was deemed the "Sugar Showdown - Science Responds to Fructophobia" (link also contains videos of all lectures). The most notable quote from this meeting was from John White, Ph.D., of White Technical Research who stated that "You don't often see this at a meeting..... (a) groundswell of researchers pushing back against inflammatory remarks and overstated remarks."

The most telling part of this Sugar Showdown was the Question and Answer section where several scientists took Dr Lustig to task regarding overstating the research and his heavy reliance on animals models (especially when discussing sugar/fructose and addiction) which have been shown to be unreliable when representing human responses.

Cardiologist James Rippe, M.D" was quoted as saying after the event "People called him on it today...by going to the media directly, he said, Dr. Lustig didn't have to have the same standards of proof that scientists usually must have."

This is also worrying for many other 'campaigners' who also champion sugar and fructose as being the source of many modern disease epidemics. Australian lawyer and author David Gillespie has become a mini-celebrity on the back of his best-selling books entitled 'Sweet Poison - Why Sugar is Making Us Fat' and 'Big Fat Lies - How the diet industry is making you sick, fat & poor', and holds similar views to Robert Lustig in a number of areas. Although, he too has come under fire from numerous qualified health professionals for misrepresenting and cherry-picking
research, most noticeably via the website David Gillespies Big Fat Lies.

So, on the surface, it would seem that Dr Robert Lustig's position isn't supported by the bulk of the scientific literature nor by his researching colleagues. Although many claim that pioneers in many areas who were deemed ahead of their time, weren't accepted when they went against 'conventional wisdom'!

Time will tell whether Dr Lustig's theories pass the litmus test in the area of book sales and acceptance by the general public.

Book Review of *Fat Chance - Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Processed Food, Obesity, and Disease* to follow.

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