Gut Health As Destiny

Scientists identify specific groups of gut microbes that could increase or decrease someone's risk of suffering a stroke-- and recovery prospects

May 6, 2022 By Mike Barr

The research was presented this week at the European Stroke Organization Conference (ESOC) in Lyon, France.

The research team, from Barcelona, Spain, took stool samples from recent stroke sufferers and from healthy individuals to compare. They then performed DNA sequencing to identify the different microorganisms present in their guts, and whether certain groups of bacteria correlated with their functional recovery.

They identified six bacteria strains that appeared to affect stroke severity– as well as one other that related to poor functional recovery.

Head researcher, Dr. Miguel Lledos, of Catalonia's Sant Pau Research Center, explained that their discovery "opens the exciting prospect that, in the future, we may be able to prevent strokes or improve neurological recovery by examining the gut microbiota

There are currently no specific neuroprotective treatments to prevent neurological worsening after stroke, and so the prospect that clinicians (and the public at large) might avail themselves of tools and methods both to gain insight on the health of their gut micro-ecosystems and to moderate them is quite empowering indeed.

The functional medicine world has been aware of much of this for some time with, perhaps evolutionarily rudimentary, home test kits like Genova Diagnostics GI Effects, Doctors Data GI360 and Diagnostic Solutions' GI-MAP increasingly in demand.

And while it might be tempting to think that a probiotic or prebiotic daily supplement represents the obvious gut health quick fix tune-up, real and sustainable results are generally achieved from a "weed & feed"* program of 3-6 months duration– and a kind of Terry Wahls type lifetime commitment to getting mounds and mounds of dark leafy greens, tubers and seeds in one's everyday eating. Yes, you guessed it, the future of healthy living can be found (with a few exceptions) in the past. So go till thy crops!

(Read an extended version of this post at his site, Root Resolution Health.)

Mike Barr, a longtime Poz Contributing Editor and founding member of and scribe for the Treatment Action Group (TAG), is a functional medicine practitioner and herbalist in NYC. Reach out to him here.

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