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Anti-smoking campaign going for the heart

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB) recognises that there is a need to sensitise the Barbadian public by means of an effective, impactful mass media anti-smoking campaign to raise the awareness of the link between heart disease and smoking.

One of the major risk factors related to heart disease is that of smoking. Smoking is a cause of heart disease because it leads to the narrowing and blocking of vessels which carry the blood to the heart muscle. Smoking reduces the amount of available oxygen in the blood, causing the heart to work harder.

People who smoke have an increased level of atherosclerosis in their coronary arteries.

This is a build-up of fatty material – called atheroma – which can cause the inside lining of the artery to rupture, leading to a clot. If a clot forms in a narrowed coronary artery, the artery can suddenly become blocked.

This means part of the heart muscle loses its supply of blood and oxygen, resulting in part of the heart muscle being damaged. This is a heart attack, also known as a myocardial infarction – myocardium refers to the heart muscle and infarction refers to the death of a part of it. A heart attack can cause severe chest pain, but other symptoms include shortness of breath, nausea, heaviness or tightness in the chest, stomach, arms, shoulder or jaw.

Some heart attacks only cause a small amount of damage to heart muscle. In these cases, people can recover quite quickly. However, if a large part of the muscle gets damaged, it may limit the heart's pumping efficiency.

A survey of patients of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital showed that cardiovascular diseases, i.e., hypertension, ischaemic heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, were more than twice as common in smokers as in non-smokers. To quote further from that survey's summary:

- Smokers were over-represented in medical hospital admissions
- Male predominance of smoking admissions
- Four-fifths of smokers started before 21 years of age
- Admissions with cardiovascular diseases were twice as common in smokers

Therefore the campaign will seek to attempt to reverse these trends.

The campaign's specific measurable objectives are quite simple – achievement of all of the following within the timescale of the campaign:

- Production of a Bajan version of a video clip based on the British Heart Foundation's media campaign of 2004 entitled **Fatty Cigarette** – to be used as a television advert and at local cinemas.
- Printing of a range of booklets on topics such as **Smoking And Your Heart** and **Smoking And How To Give It Up** to be distributed to the population of Barbados.
- A media campaign on radio through a weekly slot on the disabilities programme.
- The setting up of a specific website **"Smoking And The Heart"** with links to other related websites in the anti-smoking world and those dealing with heart disease.
- Production of a range of warning leaflets such as **"Finding It Hard To Live With**

Smoking" to be distributed throughout Barbados.

- A media campaign in the Press aimed at promoting the **"Fatty Cigarette"** image by a range of adverts.

• Production of a series of mail shots to all households in Barbados carrying the message **Smoking Kills** and the link to heart disease.

Once funding is obtained the campaign will commence early in 2008.

Barbadians not accessing cardiac rehab services

by PROFESSOR TREVOR HASSELL

FIFTY-FIVE PER CENT of Barbadians are overweight or obese, 20 per cent of Barbadians are hypertensive and 17 per cent are diabetics. One Barbadian every day suffers a stroke. Heart disease is a significant source of ill health and premature death and a major contributor to the epidemic of chronic non communicable diseases.

International evidence indicates that heart patients who do not take part in a cardiac rehabilitation programme are 25 per cent more likely to die within the next two to five years than those who have had cardiac rehabilitation.

Cardiac rehabilitation is a programme in which persons who have had a heart event such as a heart attack, angina, heart surgery, pacemaker implantation, poor circulation to the legs, and heart failure, receive counselling about the disease process and how to manage it.

Additionally, persons in the rehabilitation programme are counselled on nutrition and on appropriate use of medications, begin an exercise programme, are assisted in modifying the risk

factors of diabetes, hypertension, high blood cholesterol, physical inactivity, smoking and obesity, and are provided with emotional support and given vocational guidance to enable return to work.

It is estimated that 80 per cent of Barbadians who have had a heart event do not receive or benefit from cardiac rehabilitation despite the fact that this service is made available by the Ministry of Health free of cost for all indigent heart patients attending the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and is provided at the **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados (HSFB)**.

Barbadians with heart problems should be encouraged to enrol in the cardiac rehabilitation programme at the **HSFB**, and should enquire from their doctor whether or not they are suitable candidates to benefit from cardiac rehabilitation, or telephone the foundation to seek this information. Referral to, and participation in, a cardiac rehabilitation programme is anticipated to improve quality of life and lead to increased life span.

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Caribbean Nutrition – Part 2

FOR THOSE concerned about the sodium content of coconut water, be assured that a single glass will provide only 60mg sodium compared to the 700 mg in V8 canned vegetable juice. Also, be assured that the coconut water has no fat.

The fat of the coconut resides in the jelly and will thus be found in coconut milk, but there is no cholesterol since the coconut is of plant origin and cholesterol is found only in foods of animal origin. This means that butter will have cholesterol but coconut milk, like the vegetable margarines, is free of cholesterol. Moreover, the traditional way of cooking with coconut milk for flavour is better than using margarine, which is often substituted in porridge, rice and peas and soups. A tablespoon of coconut milk has only 38 calories and 4g fat compared to 111 calories in the same amount of margarine and 11.5 g fat.

Also, the fat in coconut is healthier for the body than margarine fats. Two other sources of fat that are often mislabelled are the Jamaican Ackee and the Avocado pear. Neither has any cholesterol and the fat is monounsaturated – the same type of fat that we pay so much for in the olive oil.

Admittedly, broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts – like other vegetables – will provide Vitamin C, minerals, flavonoids and other phytochemicals, but they are no match for our local callaloo (amaranth) in terms of calcium, iron or Vitamin A.

Callaloo has more than four times the calcium, two or more times the iron and more than twice the Vitamin A as the American vegetables. The whole grain cereals are indeed a good source of fibre, but calorie for calorie our provisions are equally beneficial.

The Irish potato, brown rice and whole kernel corn provide the least fibre per serving. Those of better value are whole wheat bread, green banana and sweet potato, providing 1.5 g per serving of about 70 calories. Richer still is rolled oats at 1.96g; but topping the list, you guessed it, is local breadfruit at 2.45 for a serving of two slices.

So next time you reach for goods on the shelf, don't forget our local products are the best.