

The media has irresponsibly taken viral a fragment of information purporting that coconut oil may be bad for your heart from an article published in the medical journal "Circulation" 2017, 135:e1-24, as a presidential advisory committee report from the AHA, "Dietary Fats and Cardiovascular Disease". The four "core studies" this committee relied on were all conducted in the 1950s, were relatively small groups of men only in three of the four studies, were conducted in populations that almost certainly were not consuming coconut oil on any regular basis, and were studies comparing diets with animal saturated fats to diets with polyunsaturated fats. Animal and human fat is well known to store hormones, pesticides, antibiotics and other environmental substances, which could be a factor in heart disease, whereas vegetable fats such as coconut oil would not be so likely to contain these potentially harmful substances. The authors do not mention whether age and smoking were controlled in these studies; smoking, which was very prevalent in the 1950s compared to the 2010's is a major contributor to heart disease. The raw numbers of how many people in each group had cardiac events was not presented, making the summaries difficult to evaluate. The clincher in this article is that they state on page e13, under the section on coconut oil, "Clinical trials that compared direct effects on CVD [cardiovascular disease] of coconut oil and other dietary oils have not been reported." They rely on

studies of individual saturated fatty acids that show a miniscule increase in LDL (co called "bad") cholesterol but rationalize away a similar small increase in HDL ("good") and an improved LDL to HDL ratio. For example, lauric acid (50% of coconut oil) resulted in a less than 1 mg/dl point increase in both LDL and HDL cholesterol, with typical LDL values ranging from less than 100 to 160 mg/dl. Could a change of less than 1 mg/dl really have that much impact? In addition, the problem here is that natural fats such as coconut oil and even lard do not come as individual fatty acids but rather combinations of many fatty acids which may balance each other out. Completely ignored in this report are the saturated fats in coconut oil known as medium chain triglycerides that could balance out the longer chain fats. Coconut oil also contains some mono- and polyunsaturated fats. One of the important details that the AHA is missing here is that 70% of the saturated fats in coconut oil are medium chain triglycerides (C6 through C12, lauric acid) which are

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RESPONSE TO AHA ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON

DIETARY FATS

&  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

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either converted to ketones or burned immediately as fuel by muscle and other organs and not stored as fat. Lauric acid has some properties of medium chain and longer chain fatty acids. Ketones come from breakdown of fat and provide an alternative fuel to the brain and most other organs during starvation or fasting or to cells that are insulin resistant. In a recent study conducted in Japan, lauric acid was found to potently stimulate ketone production in astrocytes in cultures; astrocytes are brain cells that nourish other brain cells. By comparison, butter, lard and animal fat contain minimal medium chain triglycerides and they are not found in soybean, olive, corn, safflower and most other oils. There are hundreds of studies of potential benefits of coconut oil; for example, lauric acid, which is a medium chain triglyceride and about 50% of coconut oil, is antimicrobial - there are numerous studies showing that lauric acid kills many bacteria, viruses, fungi like candida and protozoa. A few small cholesterol studies looking at coconut oil were conducted decades ago in animals or a few men over short term and used hydrogenated coconut oil - any hydrogenated oil will increase cholesterol. Also, the diets were deficient in omega-3 fatty acids which can also increase cholesterol levels. There are studies of entire populations for whom coconut oil provides 1/3 to 2/3 of the diet showing that they were of normal height and weight, had normal blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol levels at all ages. The committee surmises that people who eat saturated fats likely have other bad eating habits without any proof. These days, the people who embrace coconut

oil are likely embracing healthier foods as well and a healthier lifestyle in general and eating fish and/or taking omega-3 fats, which weren't on the radar in the 1950s when the so-called "core studies" for this report were conducted.

The folks in the AHA and other organizations who perpetuate these myths about coconut oil need to really do their homework and learn more about medium chain triglycerides and study the other beneficial effects of coconut oil, which they choose to ignore. The bottom line that came out of their lengthy report is that "coconut oil is bad for your heart", which has now been perpetuated by media who jumped on this conclusion that is not even based on direct research of coconut oil and heart disease. This message has gone viral worldwide. The impact of this could take a devastating toll on the economies of countries that produce coconut oil, mostly made up of individual farmers and their families trying to make a living. These economies were devastated in the 1960s and have been slowly recovering from the initial similar AHA statement on saturated fats in 1961 based on the same four "core studies". It is irresponsible and unconscionable for this advisory committee to make such sweeping claims without direct proof that coconut oil causes heart disease.

For more information on coconut oil and ketones please Dr. Mary New Port's website at [www.coconutketones.com](http://www.coconutketones.com).

Source: *The Healthy Ways News letter* (14/2) by Dr. Bruce File ■

## Workshop on Replanting & Rejuvenation held in AP

The Department of Horticulture, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh conducted a workshop on new Scheme 'Rejuvenation & Replanting of Coconut Gardens' on 21.07.2017 at Meeting Hall, SC Corporation, Zilla Parishad, Guntur.

Shri. Chiranjiv Choudhary IFS, Commissioner of Horticulture, AP chaired the meeting. Dr. Ch. Padmavathi, Deputy Director of Horticulture welcomed the gathering. Shri. Chiranjiv Choudhary IFS released a Telugu pamphlet on the Scheme-Replanting & rejuvenation. While releasing the pamphlet, he called up on the implementing officers to expedite the base line survey in a farmer participatory manner by involving the FPOs formed in the State. The Scheme shall be implemented in the targeted project areas so as to eradicate the diseases affecting the coconut plantations



and also to rejuvenate the existing plantations by following the recommended scientific practices.

Shri Jayanath R, Deputy Director (I/C), CDB, State Centre, presented the details and modalities of implementation of scheme. All the Assistant Director of Horticulture, Horticulture Officers of the major coconut growing districts, Chairman of CPCs formed in A.P and Field officers of CDB attended the meeting. An interactive session was also arranged for the officials.