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Earthing, Inflammation, and Aging

By Earthing Institute / November 20, 2017



Type the word “inflammation” in the search box at the U.S. National Library of Medicine (Pub Med) website and you’ll get some 700,000 medical research articles to consider. The very first one goes back to an 1813 paper on inflammation in the eyes.

It’s been since 2000, however, that the relationship between inflammation and disease has really taken off and specifically the relationship between chronic inflammation and chronic disease. Hitherto, inflammation was largely thought of as the body’s response to injury and infection. That, to be sure, is what acute inflammation is about. But now, researchers have become preoccupied with the chronicity factor, that is long-term, and the nitty-gritty details of how chronic inflammatory underlies many of the most common health disorders, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and

neurodegenerative conditions. Currently (2020) there are more than 117,000 articles on chronic inflammation to explore, about 100,00 of them published during the last 20 years.

Why is there such a big and growing interest in chronic inflammation research?

In the 1980s, medical investigators started to take notice that immune cells congregate at sites of diseased tissue in the body in a wide variety of apparently unrelated disorders. One of the earliest observations involved atherosclerosis, where the lining of arteries become inflamed and damaged, and develop into a potentially life-threatening witches’ brew of fat and debris, the basis of plaque. Russell Ross of the University of Washington identified the presence of macrophages in atherosclerotic tissue, white blood cells known to flock to sites of inflammation. During the next twenty years, arterial disease became increasingly linked to an inflammatory process. By 2000, ongoing studies by Harvard researchers led to the breakout conclusion that cardiovascular disease was inflammatory in nature. By 2004, “smoldering” inflammation had been incriminated as the silent menace behind multiple diseases. The chronic inflammation revolution took center stage worldwide on magazine covers, page one in newspapers, and TV news headlines.

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Our Earthing book focuses a good deal on inflammation. In it, we suggest that the ground beneath our feet is the “original anti-Inflammatory.” In other words, the biggest anti-inflammatory on the planet is, well, the surface of the planet itself. If proven true, that’s a pretty neat design-by-nature. In the book, as you’ve probably read, we make a strong argument about how contact with the Earth, either by being barefoot outside or sleeping or sitting on Earthing products indoors, quenches inflammation by allowing the Earth’s infinite supply of negatively-charged electrons to rise up into the body and snuff out the hitmen of chronic inflammation, the free radicals. The theory of the Earth as an anti-inflammatory had never been mentioned before in research. It is still just a theory but we don’t know how else to explain the way that Earthing knocks down inflammation.

But what about aging? Could chronic inflammation be the main cause of aging or a major factor accelerating aging? Can Earthing slow the aging process due to its obvious and remarkable impact on inflammation?

Improving the health of older people can – and must – be one of the goals of modern gerontology, the study of aging. It is imperative in order to decrease the alarming rate of hospitalization, risky and frequently injurious administration of multiple medications, and soaring age-related disease-care costs. Physiological functions naturally decline with age and negatively influence the absorption and/or metabolism of nutrients, a degradation process further compromised by drug side effects and interference.

The natural slowdown occurring in cells and tissues with advancing age are responsible for an increased risk of disease and death. Part of this process involves the aging of the immune system – called immunosenescence – characterized by a chronic low-grade inflammatory status of the whole aging organism. This process has been referred to by some researchers as inflamm-aging. More than 300 theories have been put forward to explain the reduced functionality associated with aging but none fully explain the immunobiology (physiological functioning of the immune system) of senescence.

So what are some of the current recommendations of researchers to delay the process?

- 1) Healthier nutrition and maintaining a robust population of beneficial bacteria (microflora) in the gut, a major element of the immune system. Part of a healthier diet has to include caloric restriction. People tend to overeat, particularly the wrong kinds of food, and put on belly fat, an actual source of increased inflammation in the body.
- 2) Exercise. You’ve heard this many times before, so I won’t dwell on the subject. Exercise, even a minimum, is good for your body and spirits.
- 3) Antioxidants have been heralded as having the potential to increase longevity by curtailing the effect of oxidative stress on the body. Oxidative stress means rampant free-radicals that damage healthy tissue throughout the body. Such damage creates chronic inflammation.

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contact with the Earth offers a powerful intervention against chronic illnesses by decreasing or eliminating inflammation, among other benefits, and will likely one day be recognized as a profoundly simple, natural, and effective way to improve health and healing. There is much support in the research community about chronic stimulation of the immune system leading to exhaustion and for the free radical theory of aging as the leading explanation of the aging process. Earthing has a big impact on both. Earthing counteracts free radical damage by providing the body with an abundance of electrons. Electrons are the power behind antioxidants, and so they consequently prevent or reduce inflammation. Such effects produce a relaxation of the body, and thus a reduction in physiological stress. Stress resistance = ability to survive, and by reducing stress, Earthing improves the ability of the body to survive.

One of the factors in this overall equation is chronic antigenic load, meaning the lifelong exposure to a variety of infectious agents for a period much longer than previously encountered during human evolution (because people are living longer than ever). Acute inflammation is how the body neutralizes dangerous/harmful agents, but later in an extended lifespan, such inflammation fails to become effectively countered by an aging immune system. One reason for this could be a lack of connection with the Earth's supply of electrons. Modern lifestyle and footwear separate us from the ground's electron supply. We refer to this common reality as an "electron deficiency" and suggest it is an overlooked cause not only of chronic inflammation but perhaps the ravages of aging itself.

Can Earthing reduce the severity and incidence of chronic illness and extend the quality and quantity of life? We seriously think so. Earthing has produced major health improvements in thousands of cases. What Clint Ober first observed, and described in the Earthing book, is now being reported to us by health professionals around the world. Such improvements were also reported during a back-to-Nature movement in Germany that started in the 1880s and featured being barefoot outdoors and even sleeping on the ground. We will write about that movement at a later time.

Earthing studies and feedback indicate that inflammation and stress decrease substantially, and sometimes dramatically. Contact with the Earth appears to dynamically boost the body's own self-repair and healing mechanisms. This suggests to us that inflamm-aging may be the result of long periods without contact with the electrons of the earth. Our simple solution for the disconnect is pretty obvious: just reconnect to the Earth. It is not a panacea, but it sure may be a difference in how long and well we live.

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