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KAT'S INTERVIEW: DR. HUGO RODIER, INTEGRATIVE PHYSICIAN & RADIO PERSONALITY FROM SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

The humans sometimes get the spotlight around here. Our president, Cindy, became friends this year with Dr. Hugo Rodier, an integrative physician and radio personality in Salt Lake City, Utah.

She finally talked Dr. Rodier into being interviewed by this kat. He gets points for not only being an integrative practitioner, but also for not taking himself too seriously.

When I met with Dr. Rodier (pronounced "Ro-dee-ay), his four year old daughter, Cosette, was with him. I usually don't appreciate the presence of children at this age, but she was quite tolerable. Of course, the humans thought she was quite delightful.

Dr. Rodier has a fascinating background, which goes well beyond traditional medicine:

- Born in Chile, native Spanish speaker & fluent in French
- Volunteer work in India, Rwanda, Zaire, Somalia, & Ethiopia, as well as in Alaska and with a local homeless shelter
- Adjunct professor at the University of Utah (School of Medicine & College of Nutrition)
- Editor "Integrative Medicine" newsletter

I could go on, but you get the idea.

I asked Dr. Rodier what topic most interests him and he shared:

"I am particularly interested in the field of cellular communication. Did you know that the last six Nobel Prizes for Medicine were for contributions to understanding cellular communication?"

"The body is comprised of trillions of cells. There are four essential things cells have to be able to manage, including: mitochondrial function, oxidation, inflammation, and toxicity."

"Let's start with oxidation and think of each cell as acting like a car, taking in oxygen and fuel and expelling exhaust (from combustion), which takes the form of free radicals. If you're lacking in antioxidants, you're vulnerable to the damaging effects of cellular exhaust, otherwise known as free radicals."

"In addition to managing free radicals, you have to have the right nutrients to support cellular energy and rebuilding of cells (mitochondrial function). Bad diets, in contrast, cause inflammation and malabsorption problems, the exact reverse of how you want to treat the body."

Dr. Rodier went on to talk about environmental toxins, saying:

"Two people can be exposed to the same pesticides, but one person gets Parkinson's and the other one doesn't. The difference is in how well the liver can detoxify the body. Cells in the liver have to have the right micro-nutrients to do this kind of heavy lifting."

For those of you who long ago put your biology books away, here's a link with further information on cellular nutrition:

<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=faq&dbid=19>

Dr. Rodier is quite passionate about the importance of the "gut" (intestines) to health, both mental as well as physical.

"Sixty percent of the immune system is in the gut and 95 percent of the neurotransmitters are in the gut. New hormones are constantly being found in the gut. These things make the intestines central to good health, with the old adage of food as the 'best medicine' being as true as ever."

Dr. Rodier rattled off a dozen hormones discovered recently in the gut, but instead of putting some of our less patient readers to sleep, I'm including a link to a text called: "The New Biology of Gastrointestinal Hormones:"

http://www.uib.no/med/avd/miapr/arvid/GI/Phys_Rev_1998_78_1087.pdf

After the biology lessons, I asked Dr. Rodier about The patients who come to see him. He said:

"Most of the people who come to see me are over 40 and are suffering from some kind of chronic condition. Whether it's arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes or schizophrenia, I see the chronic conditions as merely symptoms of an imbalanced psycho-neuro-immune- endocrine or PNIE system. And, I always start with diet to rebalance the system."

The PNIE (thank goodness for abbreviations!) is one of Dr. Rodier's favorite topics. He shared:

"I recently wrote a chapter for a new book coming out at BYU called 'The Mind and Nutrition.' There's a huge brain-to-gut connection and it's not all 'mind over matter' either. People get very ethereal, thinking that the mind

is preeminent, able to conquer all.”

“Yes, the mind can influence the body, but it goes both ways. The body influences the mind too. Just consider the vagus nerve, which is called a ‘cranial nerve’ and wanders from the brain down through the neck and into the abdomen.”

“The vagus nerve is known for its connection to functions ranging from heart rate and peristalsis to sweating and speech. What is not so well known is that if you were to analyze the circuits or fibers in the vagus nerve, you would find that only one third of them go down from the head to the gut. The other two thirds go up from the gut to the head, affecting brain chemistry.”

Dr. Rodier went on to explain the influence of the gut on mental conditions such as the blues, depression, and even schizophrenia and seizures.

“Ask most people with some level of depression about their digestion and elimination and you’ll find a high correlation between unhealthy guts and unpleasant or even crippling moods and emotions.”

“It’s all back to cellular communication and signaling. The body is begging for the right nutrition to heal itself, yet most folks go home with drugs that only mask the symptoms.”

I asked how many people were resistant to actually changing their diets.

“I make sure they know this is an absolute requirement before they even come to see me. The people I see are pretty motivated, whether by pain or by the unpleasant side-effects of pharmaceuticals. My patients see improvements within about two weeks, and I often see patients get off of prescription medications within two months.”

“I counsel people to get rid of the refined food and sugars, which block serotonin and messes up the guts, causing toxins to leak into the bloodstream and go directly to the brain. I teach them about things like fiber and essential fatty acids and a balance of amino acids in their diet. I recommend basic supplements to everyone.”

Dr. Rodier, a youthful 52 years old, laughed and shared that “vanity” was the other reason people become motivated to make the effort to change their diets. Our members know that one pretty well, I’d wager!

O-k, o-k, so you’re wondering what Dr. Rodier recommends on the supplements front. Here’s his list of basic favorites:

- B complex (this one is coming, based on survey requests)
- Digestive enzymes (like our [Pancreatic Enzymes](#))
- Probiotics (like our [Probiotics 16](#))
- Fiber (like our [Fiber Fit](#))
- Antioxidant combo (like our [Sam’s formulas](#))
- [Grapeseed extract](#) (we’ve got it)
- [Fish Oil](#) (our members’ number one favorite)
- [MSM](#) (we’ve got it)
- Detox herbs (like [Milk Thistle](#), which we’ve got)
- Calcium/Magnesium/Vitamin D - all in 1000mg/1000 I.U. doses (o-k, so our [Cal/Mag](#) ratios aren’t the same, but we’re planning to introduce magnesium separately next year!)

Dr. Rodier noted that some women don’t metabolize B complex well (about 15% of women), in which case he recommends [SAM-e](#).

When it comes to weight loss, Dr. Rodier likes to include [Alpha Lipoic Acid](#) to control appetite and [L-Carnitine](#) to support energy while decreasing calories. He added that L-Carnitine is important to help cells take essential fatty acids in and manage cellular communication.

To complete our interview, I asked if Dr. Rodier had any closing comments. He did:

“One thing. This is not ‘alternative’ medicine, although big pharmaceuticals would like you to believe nutritional approaches are non-mainstream and simply ‘alternative.’

Dr. Rodier is a bit like a walking encyclopedia and can quote research from prestigious mainstream journals, remembering the month and even the page number of important articles. Dr. Rodier is passionate when he states:

“Nutritional approaches are featured in JAMA and the New England Journal of Medicine all the time. We’re no longer talking about ‘alternative’ medicine; we’re talking about ‘integrative’ medicine!”

Of course, our fair members get this one already. ^..^

So, some of you are wondering if Dr. Rodier does telephone consultations. He does, but his schedule tends to stay pretty booked up, so plan three to four weeks out.

You can reach Dr. Rodier through his office at hrodier@pcmclinic.com or at 801.576.1086.

If you’re in the Utah/Idaho/Wyoming area, you can tune into [K-Talk](#) radio 630 AM on Saturday mornings between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

If you are interested in subscribing to Dr. Rodier’s “Integrative Medicine” newsletter (where Dr. Rodier summarizes news from the more than 150 scientific journals he reads each month). One year subscription is \$40, two year is \$75.

To subscribe now, send your name, address, phone number, and check to:

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Please make checks payable to "Hugo Rodier, MD"

We’ll be interviewing Dr. Rodier again and again over time, so stay tuned for more!

O-k, time to scat!

Still purringly yours,

Guido

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