

### *March Celiac Support Group Meeting Notes*

- ❖ At the start of the meeting Cassandra announced that you can now register for the Celiac Walk online. So far 43 people have registered.
- ❖ Our Guest speaker tonight was Dr. Wangen, who Susan Kath introduced to the group. He is a naturopath from Seattle who has gluten intolerance as well as a dairy allergy. He has written the book “Healthier without Wheat” and spoke with our group tonight on Celiac disease and gluten intolerance.
- ❖ He mentioned how wheat has not always been part of the human diet, and it recently became more popular with the development of agriculture. He said for about 2 million years humans consumed very little wheat or grains. And only in the past 10,000 years have they consumed wheat. In the past 100 years there has been an even greater increase in the consumption of wheat.
- ❖ Dr. Wangen stated that most people who react to wheat are reacting to gluten and that gluten contains gliadin. He mentioned that only gluten free oats are ok to consume due to the manufacturing of commercial oats they are often cross contaminated with wheat in the process.
- ❖ He talked about the ways people react to gluten and made mention of the traditional allergic reaction people with a wheat allergy would experience such as hives, asthma, rash, or anaphylaxis. With gluten intolerance it is different in that it is an antibody reaction.
- ❖ The difference between lactose intolerance and gluten intolerance was discussed during his presentation as well. He stated that lactose intolerance is an enzyme deficiency while gluten intolerance was an immune reaction.
- ❖ Dr. Wangen talked about Celiac Disease and how it is diagnosed with blood tests and confirmed with an endoscopy and biopsy of the small intestine. With Celiac disease the villi, which are the fingerlike extensions of the small intestine, will be damaged. He mentioned some of the genetic testing that is done with Celiac disease. He said that most of the people with celiac disease have the genes HLA, DQ2, and DQ8, but you don't have to have these genes to have Celiac.

- ❖ Afterward he spoke about non celiac gluten intolerance. He estimated that as many as ten percent of the people in the world could be gluten intolerant, but mentioned that it is unknown at this point what the true figure would be. He stated that celiac disease shows villous atrophy while gluten intolerance does not. He said you don't have to have intestinal damage to have gluten intolerance.
- ❖ He talked about some of the symptoms of celiac disease or gluten intolerance in infants. Among them are: Colic, fatigue, diarrhea, gas, vomiting, failure to thrive, poor growth, angry disposition, chronic ear infections, refusal to eat, eczema, constipation and poor sleep. Then he spoke about how some of the same symptoms can be seen in adults and in addition joint pain, headaches, heartburn, and muscle aches.
- ❖ Dr Wangen talked about several studies that have been done on Gluten intolerance and celiac disease. The first one he spoke about was done in the 1950's and was called Bread and tears. It was done by a doctor who noticed that children were having bad reactions to wheat. When he put them on a gluten free diet their moods improved significantly within just a few days. Another study involved teens with depression that also had Celiac disease and was done in 2005. When the gluten was removed from their diet their psychiatric issues improved. Another study involved Adults with non celiac gluten intolerance who dealt with fatigue, and when they removed gluten from their diet their symptoms improved.
- ❖ Some of the Neurological issues with Celiac Disease were discussed by Dr. Wangen as well. Some of them were mentioned at our last meeting but can include: ADHD, Alzheimer's, Autism, Difficulty concentrating, white brain lesions, and insomnia. In addition to this he discussed a study that was done on ADHD and Celiac Disease. He said that in the population the study showed that ADHD symptoms were very represented in this group. Another study he mentioned talked about two individuals with Alzheimer's and Celiac Disease. Once they removed gluten from their diet, the Alzheimer's got better. He mentioned that they had not done more studies in this area. Another study done in Norway talked about Children with Autism that were put on a gluten free, and casein free diet. Of the children in the

study 20 were put on it and 20 were not. Those that followed the diet had a significant reduction in symptoms.

- ❖ Dr. Wangen then spoke about repertory problems and reactions to foods in general. Some of the reactions include, wheezing, chronic cough, sinusitis, shortness of breath, and asthma. Women's health issues as they relate to Celiac disease were also talked about. Some of the issues were irregular menstrual cycle, infertility, and early menopause.
- ❖ He spoke about some of the cancers that are associated with celiac disease such as colon cancer, esophageal cancer, melanoma, non Hodgkin's lymphoma, and small bowel cancer. Many of the problems he said were due to two things, which are malabsorption of nutrients, and inflammation.
- ❖ Last he spoke about some of the Myths about Celiac disease. One is that Celiac is the worst form of Gluten Intolerance, another was that Celiac is the end stage of gluten intolerance, and lastly that everyone with Celiac Disease has symptoms. Dr Wangen said that other food allergies and intolerances are commonly seen in people who react to gluten. He said to think of the diagnosis as a way for you to improve your diet and eat healthier.

Thank you Dr. Wangen for presenting to our group and sharing your thoughts and ideas with us☺

He also has a blog on his site which is [www.IBStreatmentcenter.com](http://www.IBStreatmentcenter.com)

Kelly Odrzywolski