

Life and Health: It's Your Choice

Heidi Schulz, PhD

INTRODUCTION

In February 2001, a draft sequence of the human genome was published, bringing great hope that this would usher in a new era for medicine. But in the past few years, the predicted life expectancy of babies born in developed countries continued to decline. How can this be? Could our lifestyle have anything to do with it? The Creator knew that our decisions impact our health and that of our descendants.

EPIGENETICS—THE BRIDGE BETWEEN LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH

- To function, cells not only need genes, which can be compared to the hardware of a computer, but also specific “software” to function properly.
- There is information “on top of” the genes, which is essential to control and regulate which of the 22,000 genes found in each of our cells will be accessible for use.
- No single cell uses the information contained in all these genes; thus, it is important that only those genes that are needed can be accessed and are “readable.” All others must remain “muted” or inaccessible.

EPIGENETIC MARKERS THAT BRIDGE LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH

Three epigenetic processes are known to act as the bridge between lifestyle and cellular processes: ***methylation, histone changes, and microRNA.***

EPIGENETICS AND ADDICTION

Epigenetics also plays a key role in addictions. Stable changes in gene activity in nerves of the reward system are based, at least partially, on epigenetic changes. For instance, cocaine use leads to histone changes and causes the cells to switch on a different “program.”

CONCLUSION

Most health outcomes depend on our small, everyday decisions. As in retrieving wood blocks in a game of Jenga, the results will not be immediately visible in most cases, but a healthy lifestyle increases the probability of plentiful health not just for us but also our offspring.

Nature’s process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well.

LINK TO REFERENCES

<https://dialogue.adventist.org/3579/life-and-health-its-your-choice>



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Access the full article at [Life and health, It's your choice – Dialogue \(adventist.org\)](https://dialogue.adventist.org/3579/life-and-health-its-your-choice) or scan the QR code.

