

Column -

Shootings and health

Senseless killings, especially mass shootings in schools, like the Uvalde massacre where innocent children are gunned down, always spark public and political knee-jerk clamor for gun control, almost neglecting “people control.” Since the Second Amendment guarantees the right to bear arms and stipulates “it shall not be infringed,” gun control should only mean controlling, properly, and strictly vetting (background check and all), who should be allowed to own guns, and not infringing on law-abiding citizens’ right to own guns for personal/family protection. I am all for taking away guns from all criminals and mentally ill people, if possible, but taking away guns from good people, and leaving only the bad ones armed, is unquestionably stupid.

Hypothetically, suppose we have an epidemic of people being killed by chainsaws, knives, icepicks, baseball bats, or hammers, is banning them the solution? Guns don’t go off or kill people by themselves; the criminal pulling the trigger is the guilty one, not the gun. Also, while AK 47 (Kalashnikov Model 1947) is an assault (automatic) weapon, which should be illegal for personal use, the usually “misunderstood” and maligned AR-15s are not automatic, not assault weapons, because they fire one bullet at a time, like handguns. In view of this more explosive period in our history, an intense and comprehensive background check on individuals wanting to buy guns is obviously justified for public safety, people’s health and mental security, and peace in our society.

Food and cancer

While science finds it hard to discover a direct link between the food we eat and the risk of cancer, a 2018 study of more than 100,000 individuals concluded that **there is a correlation between consuming ultra-processed foods and a more than 10 percent increase in developing certain cancers.**

The researchers included the following highly processed food items in their clinical investigation: **soft drinks**, sugary drinks, instant soup, packaged bread and buns, packed sweets and salty snacks, **processed meats** (hot dogs, meatballs), ready meals, hydrogenated oils, modified starches, and protein isolates, items made mainly from sugar, oil, and fats. Regular consumption of processed meats **increases the risk for cancer** of the bladder, stomach, and colon. These meats are bacon, hot dogs, sliced turkey, ham, bologna, and other deli meats, all of which are processed. Other studies have revealed that **eating more than 18 ounces, or three portions, of red meat per week, raises a person’s risk of developing cancer of the colon and rectum.**

Strong evidence exists that drinking alcoholic beverage likewise increase the risk for cancer of the liver, mouth, larynx (voice box), pharynx (throat), breast, esophagus, and colorectum. **Alcohol and smoking more than doubly increase the risk for cancer.** Excess body weight also raises the risk for cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular illnesses.

To minimize the risk of cancer, a healthy lifestyle with a diet that contains a lot of multi-colored vegetables (broccoli, green leafy veggies, carrots, beans, winter squash, and peas), and the following fruits are recommended: blueberries, blackberries, cherries, acai berries, grapes, raspberries, apples, cranberries, grapefruit, and avocados. Coffee, garlic, flaxseeds, tea, walnuts, oatmeal, barley, millet, and quinoa, instead of white rice are also healthy items. A high fiber diet also lowers the risk for colon cancer. **These natural anti-oxidants eaten fresh are ten-fold better than those in pills, which are advertised as enough but actually inadequate.**

OSA and COVID

Before the vaccines for COVID-19 were available, a study was conducted to find out if there was a link between Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) and COVID-19. The researchers found that people with Sleep Apnea were at a higher risk for this viral infection and more likely to be hospitalized, more likely to need a ventilator, and had a greater mortality rate, compared to those without OSA. **However, those using CPAP therapy daily fared a lot better.** Vaccination for COVID-19 is expected to protect those with Sleep Apnea on CPAP treatment as in the general population, all other co-morbidities factored in.

Immunity wanes!

A vital reminder: Protective immunity from the vaccines for COVID-19, the first two shots, and the boosters, **all wane in about 4-6 months**, the reason people are advised to be vaccinated and to get booster shots after that period. Unlike Flu shots which confer immunity for a full year, the protection from the current COVID-19 vaccines does not last a year. Drug manufacturers are still working on vaccines for COVID-19 that would protect against more variants and last longer. In the meantime, after 6 months from the last shot you and I received (first or second booster), our immunity against COVID-19 and the current variants is greatly reduced and even lower or none for new variants. **This is not safe. Let us not be a victim of a false sense of security.** With only 67 percent of the population fully vaccinated (about 108 million unvaccinated potential spreaders in the USA and about 60 million in The Philippines), COVID-19 is expected to linger much longer and become endemic, for which vaccination (every 6? months) would most likely be needed. **Consult with your physicians for further information and advice.**

COVID-19 updates

As of Tuesday, May 31, 2022, 8:00 AM (EST), there were 532,220,279 cases of COVID-19, with 6,312,143 deaths worldwide: 85,730,597 cases with 1,031,286 deaths in the United States, and 3,690,581 cases with 60,455 deaths in the Philippines. The 7-day daily average cases were 109,997 (a 21-percent increase in cases in 2 weeks), a daily average of 374 deaths (a 20-percent increase), and 7-day average daily hospitalizations of 26,804 (a 23-percent increase in 2 weeks).

With these statistics, it is still too premature to let our guard down, especially for seniors, those with health issues, and those immunocompromised. Masking and social

distancing in public are still prudent. Full vaccination is a must - if we are to defeat this deadly invisible killer and end this pandemic soonest.

Fentanyl and cyanide

Illicit drugs on the streets are now laced with fentanyl, an opioid pain medication, which is 100 times more potent than morphine and quite lethal. About 105,752 people died of a drug overdose in 12 months ending October 2021 over the past two years, with fentanyl use showing a rapid rise, nearly twice, from 35,000 to 69,000. **While cyanide kills instantly, fentanyl, even an amount as small as the tip of a pencil, also kills expeditiously.** Taking either is suicide. And life is precious!

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