What's Wrong With Our Children?

by

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With only 1% of Americans serving in the US military, it is discouraging that a 2022 Department of Defense study indicates that 77% of young men and women applying for military service do not qualify. The majority of the disqualifications fall into 4 categories:

- Overweight/obesity (11%)
- Drug/alcohol abuse (8%)
- Medical/physical health (7%)
- Mental health (4%)

In a 2022 presentation at the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas, the presenters cited "the wellness and safety of law enforcement officers is critical not only for themselves, their colleagues, and their agencies, but also public safety."

Recently appointed Director of the FBI, Kash Patel, discussed the need for FBI agents to meet increased fitness standards. Although the media concentrated on Patel's mention of having the UFC conduct martial arts and fitness training, the discussion on fitness training benefits were ignored.

Since the 1950's, the overall wellbeing and health of American children has been in a decline. In 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and Children's Hospital Association issued a joint statement that child and adolescent mental health is a "national emergency."

Two years later, in a *Journal of Pediatrics*, article, Peter Gray, et. al. stated that anxiety and depression rates among children and teens were at an all-time high. An NIHCM 2023 publication indicated that 20 million youth have mental disorders and behavioral problems. The publication also listed factors affecting the mental and physical wellbeing of children.

Psychology Today states that rates for anxiety, depression suicidal ideation and actual suicides among children under the age of 20 have increased more than 8 to 10 higher than 50 years ago.

An overview of the literature and research does not point to any single cause for the declining wellbeing of children in America, the land of opportunity. The declining wellbeing of children is not just limited to America. The Good Childhood Report(s) indicate child wellbeing declining worldwide. There is no doubt that family, community

and society share most of the responsibility for the stress, depression, obesity and diseases among today's children and teens.

The 1950s was the harbinger of the declining wellbeing of our children. The prosperity of the '50s introduced television and fast-food restaurants as commonplace items in many American households. As time progressed, parents became obsessed with chasing the American dream and started substituting parental attention and family cohesion with technological advances. It is not uncommon today to see whole families on cell phones at restaurants with little communication among the family members taking place. This self-absorbance often takes place in the home along with serving highly processed meals. In many families, the Christmas and Thanksgiving meals often consist of frozen, pop-in-the-oven/microwave dishes, or catered meals consisting of the same prepared, processed foods found in restaurants and grocery stores.

While. . .

- television, computers and smartphones substitute for parental attention, and
- processed frozen food or takeout meals at fast food joints substitute for wholesome, freshly prepare home meals,

. . . the drug, insurance, and medical industries are treating only the symptoms of mental and physical disorders in both adults and children.

For decades the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given its stamp of approval on allowing harmful chemicals in our food. For example, propylene glycol is used in most processed foods, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. The FDA defines what percentage of it can be used in various food groups such as general food categories (2.0%), confections (24%), and seasonings (97%). The European Food Safety Authority establishes a safe daily intake of 25 mg per kg body weight (.24 oz/200 lbs). While an 8 oz serving of ice cream contains about 25 mg of propylene glycol, you need to also add in the amount found in other foods.

Another FDA approved chemical is ethylene glycol, a highly poisonous chemical. Although not approved for use in food, it is approved for food packaging. One use is the packaging for beverages (plastic bottles). Recent research (FDA) has "discovered" microplastics in many prepared foods and bottled drinks. The NIH has also found significant amounts of microplastics in the brain, and that they can induce various medical issues in the body.

There are a lot of other chemicals used in food production that the FDA allows. These range from fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormones, pesticides, preservatives, and a host of other chemical groups used in packaging and to induce people to eat more or other foods.

Regardless of the daily chemical limits that the FDA places on various foods, food manufacturers and the FDA do not take into consideration the other foods you eat or even over eat. While a can of fruit may contain 3.5 servings (1/2 cup/serving), more often people will either eat the entire can or split it into two servings. Although the FDA requires food labeling, the labeling process only requires the ingredients and the minimum "recommended daily allowance"(RDA) of nutrients. Such labeling is highly meaningless, misleading and does not take into consideration the health, age, weight, height, activity, etcetera. of children, teens, adults, or seniors. The NIH publication, "*Recommended Dietary Allowances: 10th Edition*," discusses the falsehood of RDA labeling issues. Daisy Whitebread's article on "Guide to Recommended Daily Intakes" provides a much better understanding of nutrient needs.

IMHO, it is more important to understand the ingredients in a packaged or processed food than the RDA. If the amount of a particular ingredient is below the FDA's allowable amount, it does not have to be listed. Additionally chemical or industrial names can be used instead of their common names in the list of ingredients. This is further exacerbated when common names, such as sugar, are used to avoid listing a myriad of different sugars. In other words, the FDA allows the food and drug industries to list ingredients that are to the advantage of producers. The labeling process for food and drugs needs to be revised to reveal the truth about a product and not mislead the consumer.

Just as the FDA requires the labeling and warnings of tobacco and alcohol use as health risks, similar warnings are needed for televisions, cell/smartphones, computers, and other technological devices, especially those with digital screens. Such warnings should not be in small print and limited to only device manuals, instruction or warranties but also posted in stores and regularly viewed as public service announcements in the media.

All digital display devices in common use today emit some form of radiation. The manufactures claim that the amount and type of radiation emitted has little or no effects. The reduction of radiation output has come a long way since the advent of color televisions in the 1960s. While the initial studies concentrated on the impact of radiation on the eyes, the effects of long-term exposure to radiation from infancy through adulthood has been minimally studied.

There is no doubt that the effects of long-term exposure to high dose radiation is cumulative over time and can, and often does, lead to cancer and other health issues. Indeed, the CDC states that radiation: "can cause emotional and psychological distress." (SafeSleeve)

From the studies of the radiation effects on adults, we can extrapolate two things.

- That any amount of radiation exposure is cumulative over time
- That the combined impact of various radiation types and exposure levels on the human body is unknown

And yet, parents routinely expose their children from infancy through their teens to digital devices which emit radiation.

Prior to these technological devices, infants were given many different “toys” that would help develop their motor skills, and depending on the toy, their intellectual development. As the children grew, they were encouraged to play and explore the outdoors. During these times, the parent-child relationship often developed and grew into a strong bond.

However, as we entered the technological era, we also entered a time of “keeping up with the Jones’.” This trend lead to many households having both parents working. Consequently when one or both parents were at home and were having to take care of home chores, they would typically give their infant children a digital toy to keep them busy and quiet. This process would continue into the pre-school ages. Withstanding the radiation aspect of the toys, the children would psychologically suffer from a lack of physical contact and social development with their parents. (NIH)(Little Leaders Foundation)

As a child gets older, he/she goes to school and is further exposed to the radiation from computers and cell phones. Additionally the child becomes more dependent on these devices for interaction with others which further exacerbates the lack of social development; results in reduced physical activity; increased sleep deprivation; and increased behavioral issues. (American Family Physician)(Healthline)

As the above issues are amplified by a lack of parental and self discipline, and increased peer and social pressures, many teens turn to drug experimentation, eventual addiction and further self-destruction behavior.

Research into the role and effect of microplastics has revealed disturbing findings with regard to body and brain health, and to many aspects of our environment. Since microwaves became common in the 1970’s, people born since then have been exposed their entire lives to microplastics.

Like radiation, microplastics are cumulative in our bodies. It is estimated that our brains may contain up to 7 grams (a spoon’s worth) of these tiny plastic shards. Between 2016 and 2024, the concentration of microplastics in the brain has risen 50 percent. Researchers also found that people diagnosed with dementia have up to 10 times more microplastics present in their brains than those without the condition. (Smithsonian Magazine)

Even more recent research has linked microplastics to blocking the effective absorption of antibiotics and other drugs into the body, and has reduced a plant's ability to photosynthesize up to 12%, effecting both the quality and supply of food.

When we ask "What is Wrong with Our Children?" the answer is multifaceted. As parents we have failed to protect our children at the most basic level. The problems that we see in children today are just symptoms of how we have failed as parents and a society. Instead of placing our concern for the health and wellbeing of our children, we have allowed money hungry corporations and conglomerates to direct and orchestrate our children's lives. We have further allowed others to poison our children's minds with thought and ideology that takes advantage of their lack of health and wellbeing, and which further inflames its deterioration.

In essence, we have stolen the current and future wellbeing of our children from them.