FATS AND FAIRNESS

[This week's Mondays Archive was originally published on April 16, 2009. Many TTPers told me this was one of the most intriguing articles ever in TTP. Read on and decide for yourself. Enjoy!]

TTP. April 16, 2009

"Hey, guys! Got a hot date? Be sure you treat her to a nice salmon dinner!"

That's the message young bachelors could get from a recent study. Another message of the study is that socialism may get less attractive to Americans as they age. How could the same research study have both of these results? It all has to do with the relationship between fats and fairness.

The research is in the new interdisciplinary field of *Neuroeconomics*, which studies how the brain makes economic decisions. It was conducted jointly by the Interdepartmental Center for Research in Molecular Medicine and psychiatrists in the Department of Applied Health and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Pavia in Italy.

The results have been published in the science journal *Physiology & Behavior*, entitled Serum omega-3 fatty acids are associated with ultimatum bargaining behavior.

Omega-3 fatty acids are necessary for human health but are not produced by the body so you must get them from your diet. They are particularly concentrated in the brain and play an important role in brain functions such as memory.

Prior research has shown that low levels of omega-3 fatty acids are associated with increased hostility and decreased impulse control. Given this, the researchers at Pavia hypothesized that higher levels of omega-3s might have a measurable effect on the willingness of people to accept offers made to them in the ultimatum bargaining game.

The Ultimatum Game is a famous social experiment, using two people anonymous to each other. One, the "proposer," is given $10 and told to split it with the other, the "responder," any way he wants. The responder then has the choice to either accept or reject the offer.

Acceptance means both keep the money as per the proposed split. Rejection, however, means neither player gets anything.

Economists who believe that people make economic decisions rationally (the "rational man" theory) predicted that responders would accept any offer, even as low as $1, because it's not rational to prefer having nothing rather than something however small.

But surprise, in thousands of Ultimatum Games, the responder will reject - often angrily - any offer he (or she) doesn't consider "fair." An offer by the proposer to split the money 50/50 is almost always accepted, and the acceptance rate goes down rapidly as the split favors the proposer. Almost no one accepts $1.

This stumps rational man theorists. Why should the responder care if the proposer gets more than he does? It's found free money! For socialist economists, however, the experiment is a godsend. It's proof that human beings have an emotional instinct for egalitarian or socialist "fairness." It's proof that people would rather suffer rather than let someone else get something "unfairly."

Then again, it could be proof that a lot of people have certain brain deficiencies.

To test this, the Pavia researchers measured fasting serum or blood levels of the primary omega-3s, alpha-linolenic acid or ALA, eicosapentaenoic acid or EPA, and docosahexaenoic acid or DHA, in sixty undergraduate economics students. The results showed that the ratio of serum omega-3 fatty acids was significantly lower in individuals who rejected "unfair" offers as compared to those who did not.

The higher a responder's levels of ALA, EPA, and DHA, the less he or she was concerned about fairness, and was more accepting of any offer. The lower the levels, the more the responder was angrily concerned about being "treated unfairly," rejecting any offer they considered did so.

Just as for any Marxist or Socialist, the current President of the United States considers "fairness" to be the primary goal of government economic policy, not prosperity and wealth creation. He explicitly declared this one year ago today (April 16, 2008) during a Democrat candidate debate.

When asked by moderator Charles Gibson whether he would raise or lower capital gains taxes, in the light of "history showing that when you drop the capital gains tax, the revenues go up," he replied: "Well, Charlie, what I've said is that I would look at raising the capital gains tax for purposes of fairness."

Our government is being run by an individual who prefers that the majority of Americans not be wealthier in order to prevent a few of them being even wealthier, which would be taking more than their "fair share." Indeed, this is the dominating ideology permeating the entire Democrat Party.

But what would happen to its power base if increasing numbers of Americans became less susceptible to the siren song of socialist fairness?

Ask your doctor this question: What is the most common symptom of heart disease? Be prepared for his answer: The single most common symptom of heart disease is *sudden death*.

Please read that answer again and reflect on it for a moment. If you weren't fully sober and awake, you should be now.

Vast research has demonstrated that 1,000 mg (milligrams) on average of omega-3s in one's diet, either by eating foods high in them such as salmon or supplementation (such as fish oils), reduces the risk of sudden death heart attacks (which are half of all heart attacks) by 80%.

The FDA, however, made it unlawful for makers of fish oil dietary supplements to inform consumers of this fact - until Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw sued the FDA for violating their First Amendment free speech rights to make truthful and non-misleading health claims. Their victory in the Federal Courts - Pearson v. Shalala - was a great landmark for health freedom in America.

Thanks to this victory over the FDA, millions of Americans are supplementing with fish oils. Thanks

to it, there is such a growing market for foods high in omega-3s that farm-raised salmon are being bred with omega-3 levels as high as those of wild-caught salmon.

And pigs are being genetically engineered with an algae gene that pumps out so much omega-3s that soon you'll have pork with omega-3 levels equal to salmon - healthy bacon!

The consumption of omega-3s is increasing at a very rapid pace, particularly by baby boomers as they age. This means that the huge baby boomer generation is going to rapidly become less enamored with the core concept of Democrat ideology - "fairness."

Note that what always accompanies someone's demands for socialist fairness is emotional *anger*. The Democrats' game is to rouse emotions of envious anger which they can manipulate into acquiring more control over people's lives. What increased levels of omega-3s seem to do is modulate this anger. People just don't care that much any more about what's "unfair," and can thus focus more clearly on choosing what's in their genuine rational best interests.

This bodes well for politicians selling freedom and prosperity instead of envy and equality.

It bodes well for anyone selling anything reasonable, from a businessman negotiating a deal to a guy on a date.

For the "Fats and Fairness" experiment indicates that you can reduce the likelihood of irrational emotional rejections of a reasonable offer by treating the person you're negotiating with to a leisurely (allowing time for omega-3 absorption) meal of a cold water fatty fish like salmon - along with good wine to increase the absorption.

And if you're married, be sure and tell your spouse to take lots of omega-3 supplements. "They're good for your heart, honey!" is a truthful and non-misleading health claim. Of course, you want to take plenty yourself. That would only be reasonable - and fair.

Note: Many thanks to Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw for their contribution to this article. And in case you're wondering about my omega-3 intake, I take 1500mg ALA, 2160mg EPA, and 1440mg DHA for a total of 5100mg of supplemental omega-3s per day. Sudden death does not appeal to me, any more than Democrat Fairness.