Book review

Nutraceuticals, Glycemic Health & Type 2 Diabetes

N.K. Bonsu, MSc

Editors: Vijai K. Pasupuleti and James W. Anderson
Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing
Publication date: August 2008
Number of pages: 512
Format: Hardcover
Price: $275.99 CDN
ISBN: 9780813829333

Diabetes is one of the fastest growing chronic diseases globally and is the fourth or fifth leading cause of mortality in many developing and newly industrialized countries. Most methods of preventing or managing this insidious disease involve the use of drugs. However, individuals diagnosed with diabetes are increasingly searching for more natural products to prevent and manage this disease. As a result, the editors decided to examine the effect that nutraceuticals have on the glycemic health of those individuals diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and present the latest nutraceutical research in this book. They used a diverse assortment of contributors, from academia, industry and government, to compile the various chapters that make up this book. Similarly, the intended audience are researchers in academia and industry, epidemiologists, biostatisticians and health care workers, though consumers of nutraceuticals from the general public who would like a detailed scientific analysis of the research could also make use of it.

The book is divided into three sections. The first is composed of a single chapter that provides a brief overview of the various causes of diabetes as well as its prevention and management. This chapter also shows the linkage between nutraceuticals and diabetes prevention and management. The second section consists of five chapters and deals with glycemic health and type 2 diabetes. The first chapter in this section begins by providing an overview of the epidemiology of type 2 diabetes. The second chapter describes various international studies that have linked lifestyle changes in diet and exercise with prevention of type 2 diabetes as well as various pharmacological approaches. The final three chapters in this section deal with the causes of hyperglycemia and the resulting health implications and introduce the reader to the controversial aspects of diet and the glycemic index of foods.

The final section in the book is by far the most comprehensive. It provides a detailed analysis of various functional foods and nutraceuticals, including ones from among traditional Chinese medicine and Indian and Mexican herbs and plants, that have proven health benefits to those diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Some of the nutraceuticals discussed in separate chapters include dietary fibre, cinnamon, soybeans and ginseng as well as minerals and natural resistant starches. Those that have not been fully tested have shown promising results, but more research will be needed on those specific nutraceuticals. This final section ends with a short chapter that examines future trends and directions in this area.

Each of the topics is extensively researched and documented by the respective contributors. The chapters are very well written, all of the references are fairly current and relevant, and many figures and tables complement the text. This is a great book about the different nutritional interventions that can be used to combat type 2 diabetes. It is also timely, given the need for more effective means to control the incidence and prevalence of this disease and the increase in popularity of natural remedies. The benefits of many nutraceuticals are not well known. This detailed summary of the available research makes it easier to access the pertinent information, making this book a suitable addition to the literature. Researchers, epidemiologists, biostatisticians and health care workers will find this compilation to be a useful reference tool, as would senior students who are familiarizing themselves with the epidemiology of diabetes and different prevention and treatment methods.

Author references:
University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada