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Atypical anorexia (Luigi Cornaro diet) as a precaution against diseases and a sustainable weight management strategy

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Many studies show that Infection-Induced Anorexia (IIA) as an active host defense strategy promotes health recovery during an infection. IIA belongs to the atypical anorexia that are not induced by mental disorder, and should not be confused with anorexia nervosa (an eating disorder). It is atypical because the host generally has a normal weight. The first person who stated explicitly that IIA contributes to health recovery is Luigi Cornaro (1464-1566) and he used this reasoning to explain why his anorexic diet helped him to stay healthy and live long until a ripe old age of 102. In his discourses, he wrote: "When men are taken ill they discontinue, or nearly so, their food (IIA). Now, if by reducing themselves to a small quantity (IIA), they recover from the jaws of death, how can they doubt, but that, with a slight increase of diet consistent with reason, they will be able to support nature, when in health." By substantially decreasing food intake only "enough to keep body and soul together", Luigi Cornaro had found that atypical anorexia could promote health and prolong life span. The reason is, the starvation state induced by atypical anorexia is a strong stimuli for autophagy. And autophagy is an intracellular process that has multiple physiological functions such as cellular quality control, energetic balance maintenance and pathogen cleaning. So we propose that atypical anorexia (Luigi Cornaro diet) can be adopted as a promising disease-free life style and a sustainable strategy to combat the prevalent obesity epidemic.

Biography

Ligen Yu has his expertise in materials sciences, surface engineering, powder metallurgy, bibliometrics analysis and diet and weight management.

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