Becoming Unhooked

April is alcohol awareness month and while much has been debated in the scientific world about the potential benefits of drinking alcohol in moderation there is plenty of evidence (scientific and biblical) that it is better to abstain.

Recently I attended a lecture from Dr Dominique Ashen, a researcher and clinician at the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease. She reminded us of a hallmark study done in a middle-aged and elderly population of 490,000 people. The findings revealed that while all-cause mortality and cardiovascular mortality were reduced with moderate alcohol consumption, these same mortality risks increased with intake greater than 2 drinks per day due to death from alcohol-related conditions and cancer. (Thun et al, NEJM, 1997; 337:1705.)

Her conclusion was that alcohol has done more harm than good for heart health and it has increased heavy consumption and binge drinking, thus increasing the risk for many other chronic diseases. Dr Ashen’s conclusion and recommendation for best heart health was to AVOID alcohol.

I was not surprised since we see how a small drink can lead to devastating effects in the lives of those who become hooked. Not only their physical health is impacted as we see a 2x increase in hypertension, increase in sudden cardiac death and double risk of all-cause mortality and cardiovascular mortality. Excess alcohol can also lead to:

- Liver disease
- High blood fats (triglycerides)
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Fetal alcohol syndrome (if you’re pregnant)
- Certain cancers
- Injury, violence, and death
- Obesity and Diabetes from the too many calories

The choice is clear. For better physical, mental, social and spiritual health we better “Choose to say NO to alcohol, drugs and any harmful substance” (see page 4). The Adventist church continues educating people about the negative effects of alcohol and other harmful substances motivating everyone to abstain. The church in North America has embraced ARMin (Adventist Recovery Ministries) as an official ministry of the church under the Health Ministries department (go to www.AdventistRecovery.org to learn more) in an effort to help in prevention and in recovery of any addictions.

On April 7 ARMin has launched “Unhooked” in partnership with Hope Channel in an effort to encourage people to seek power in Christ to say No, not only alcohol, but to any unhealthy compulsive addictive behavior. This 28 part already gained good reviews from the community (see http://faithinspires.wordpress.com/2013/04/09/reviewing-unhooked-a-show-seeking-to-cure-addiction/) and will be broadcast every Sunday at 9pm on Hope Channel. It highlights personal stories, treatments recommendations from experts, and a message of hope in Christ. Please invite someone from church, family, friends, neighbors or co-workers. This series is for all of us, who in some way are broken and in need to become “unhooked” from unhealthy behaviors. More info at the www.hopetv.org/unhooked or at www.adventistrecovery.org.

God has shown to us the path of LIFE (Psalm 16:11). Each of us must choose to walk in it. He is eager to walk beside us.

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“... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” Deuteronomy 30:19, NIV
Health Ministries Resources

- **Adventists InStep for Life (AISFL)** is a Division wide health initiative. The website provides information and resources on how your church, school, or healthcare organization can become involved. Motivate yourself, your family and your church to register and report miles of physical activity. Consider volunteering to be your church, school, or hospital coordinator so you can report miles for others. You can watch previous webinars explaining the initiative or register for upcoming webinars at www.adventistsinstepforlife.org.

- **Adventists InStep for Life Mobile Apps** are available for download for android and iPhone users. You must first register at the website listed above then download the app (INSTEP or ADVENTIST INSTEP), and start recording your physical activity right on your phone.

- **Unhooked** is a new series on how the prevention and recovery from unhealthy habits and damaging addictive behaviors. This 28 part series was developed by Hope Channel and Adventist Recovery Ministries (ARMIn) to raise awareness and provide hope for people hurting from these compulsive harmful practices. The series was launched April 7 and will be running weekly at Hope Channel, direct TV channel 568 and streamed live online at www.hopetv.com/unhooked. For more information or to watch a trailer of the series check this website or www.adventistrecovery.org.

- **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** April is recognized in the United States as child abuse Prevention Month. With this month-long observance, communities and organizations raise awareness around the critical issues of child abuse and neglect and educate the public on prevention.

- **Circle of Six app and R3 app** was launched by the Institutes of Medicine. Circle of Six help victims of violence created a supporting network to avoid injury and seek help as needed and R3 was sponsored by Florida Hospital to assist health professionals and health enthusiasts to screen for violence and provide needed referrals. Look for Circle of 6 and R3 at the app store or android market.

- **Alcohol Awareness Month (US)** For a toolkit click on http://healthfinder.gov/nho/AprilToolkit.aspx.

- **Cancer Awareness Month (Canada)** For resources and information about the Parkinson SuperWalk 2013 go to http://www.parkinson.ca/site/c.kgLNIWODKpF/b.3531701/k.25C0/Highlights.htm.

- **Health Calendar Emphasis - APRIL**
  Canada: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-as/asc/calend/index-eng.php
  USA: http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp?m8

  **April 2013**
  - Alcohol Awareness Month (US)
  - National Child Abuse Prevention Month (US)
  - Parkinson’s Awareness Month (Canada)
  - Cancer Awareness – Daffodil Days (Canada)
  - 2 – Sexual Assault Awareness Month Day of Action
  - 7 – World Health Day
  - 1-7: National Public Health Week (US)
  - 20-27: National Infant Immunization Week (US)

- **Looking Forward (May 2013)**
  - National Physical Fitness and Sports Month (US)
  - Celiac Awareness Month (Canada)
  - Mental Health Month (US)
  - 5 - 11 Children’s mental Health Awareness Week (US)
  - 5-11 Emergency Preparedness Week (Canada)
  - 6-12 National Nursing Week (Canada)
  - 12 Canada Health Day
  - 29 National Senior Health and Fitness month (US)
  - 31 (World NO Tobacco Day (US and Canada)

**Dates to Remember**

2013

- **April 13-15**
  North Pacific Union HM Training
  Gladstone, Oregon
  Kristina.Lopez@nw.npuc.org

- **April 29-May 4**
  European Health Conference
  Prague, Czech Republic
  www.european-health-conference.org

- **September 22**
  Let’s Move Day
  www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **September 22-28**
  Let’s Move Week
  www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **September 25-27**
  Aging Conference
  Loma Linda, CA

- **September 28-29**
  Pacific Union HM Training
  NADHM@nad.adventist.org

2014

- **January 24-Feb 2**
  NAD Health Summit
  Orlando, FL
  www.NADHealthSummit.com

- **July 8-12**
  Second Global Conference on Health
  Geneva, Switzerland

- **August 28-31**
  Southwestern Union HM Training
  NADHM@nad.adventist.org

- **September 21**
  Let’s Move Day
REACH OUT

NAD REGIONAL HEALTH SUMMIT

The NAD Regional health summit took place in Flushing NY, from March 13-17 at the Sheraton La Guardia Hotel with more than 600 total participating in a variety of programs. Over 360 Health professionals, pastors, and lay people representing more than 50 countries registered to attend the 22 training workshops. Many were from across the NAD (Canada, the US, Bermuda, Guam) but most Divisions of the world and their health directors were represented. People came from as far as Australia or Zambia, all with one thing in common. Love for God and people, and a passion for ministering to people who need hope and healing. Presenters came from all sectors of the church (church, education and healthcare). This yearly Summit’s is aimed at equipping professionals and lay people to do effective community health outreach. During each evening Dr Neil Nedley presented a 3-part series entitled ‘Optimizing your brain potential’ with 300 friends attending from the surrounding community. Many of them will be contacted for further follow up as the NY13 health events continue to happen in 2013 and beyond. On Sunday a community HEALTH EXPO for kids and adults attracted others from the community and gave the opportunity for summit attendees to participate in hands on learning. These programs were streamed live at www.ChooseFullLife.org and Hope channel and will be available in the archives of the website. Save the date to attend the next Summit in Orlando, FL, Jan 24-Feb 2, 2014. (see www.nadhealthsummit.com).

LET’S MOVE

First Lady celebrates the work of faith communities

March 8 was the day in which First Lady Michelle and the Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships convened faith leaders at the White House for a celebration of their efforts in improving the health of communities by supporting the Let’s Move! initiative. Reinert, NAD HM Director, represented the Adventist church among Health leaders of other faiths who together shared their experiences and received the appreciative words shared by Mrs Obama. The date marked two years of the initiative and the First lady noted “We are starting to see some change…What you knew could happen is happening. That if you gave them the tools, the information, support, guidance and encouragement; that if you didn’t deliver the message with judgment but with love, making it relevant to their lives…their hearts just open… There is nothing more important that what you are doing. What you are doing on the ground through churches in communities will make the difference.”

ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS

Healthcare Mission in NAD

The Health Summit also convened a group of Adventist healthcare administrators representing all the healthcare systems in NAD. Mission vice-presidents, Union presidents and NAD Officers met to discuss potential ways for deeper collaboration among the church and the healthcare institutions in an effort to maximize the potential for mission in the region. Future meetings are planned to continue the momentum as the church envisions a stronger emphasis on effectively reaching NAD urban cities and beyond with hope and wholeness. One of the goals is to develop deeper trust among these sectors of the church and a sound understanding of how a comprehensive view of health ministries may incorporate the church, healthcare, and other institutions of the church.
CHOOSE to say NO to ALCOHOL, DRUGS and any HARMFUL SUBSTANCE

Facts with Hope

FACT Research published this month in the American Journal of Public Health reports that alcohol is to blame for one in every 30 cancer deaths each year in the United States. The connection is even more pronounced with breast cancer, with 15 percent of those deaths related to alcohol consumption. The study also found that drinking even small amounts of alcohol was harmful–30 percent of all alcohol-related cancer deaths are linked to drinking 1.5 drinks or less a day. The researchers concluded that while moderate drinking has been associated with heart benefits, in the broader context of all the issues and all the problems that alcohol is related to, alcohol causes 10 times as many deaths as it prevents.1

HOPE This research validates God’s counsel in Proverbs 20:1, “Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise” (NIV). But praise God, there is Christ-centered help available! If you or someone you love needs support in breaking free from alcohol, check out the resources available at AdventistRecovery.org.2

FACT A new study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that youth with a deployed military parent or sibling use drugs and alcohol at a higher rate than their peers. The study was based on data from more than 14,000 responses from youth in grades 5-11 in the 2011 California Healthy Kids Survey.2

HOPE With the long wars waged in Afghanistan and Iraq, the number and length of deployments for active U.S. military members are higher than any time in history. Isaiah 58 provides a God-inspired plan for negating some of the effects of deployment on veterans and their families. What can your church do to carry out that plan in your community?

FACT Nonalcoholic red wine is associated with a greater reduction in blood pressure than regular red wine. In a recent clinical trial, 67 men at high cardiovascular risk were randomized into three four-week treatment periods in which they drank red wine (30 g alcohol/day), the equivalent amount of dealcoholized red wine, or gin (30 g alcohol/day). Results showed that both systolic and diastolic blood pressure decreased significantly after the dealcoholized red wine intervention, and these changes correlated with increases in plasma nitric oxide (NO), which protects against heart disease. During the red-wine phase, the men had a small reduction in blood pressure and a small increase in NO, while there was no change in blood pressure and a small reduction in NO while drinking gin.3

HOPE The researchers note that although the blood-pressure reduction associated with nonalcoholic red wine was modest, reductions of this magnitude have been associated with a 14% decrease in coronary heart disease and 20% reduction in stroke risk. They concluded that the polyphenols found in red wine are the likely mediators of the blood-pressure reduction and that alcohol appears to weaken their antihypertensive effect.

FACT A nationally representative survey of about 5,400 adults found that 18% of men and 11% of women exceeded the limits set by the U.S. Agriculture Department for daily alcohol consumption. The heaviest drinkers were 31- to 50-year-olds in men and 51- to 70-year-olds in women.4

HOPE Excessive drinking is an important health problem and is not limited to youth and young adults. The Adventist church has a history of involvement in the Temperance movement in America since the late 18th century. Today, as your church works to promote a positive message about healthful living, consider how you can include awareness activities and education about the risks of alcohol use in all age groups.

References:

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This free newsletter is published by Health Ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. To learn more or subscribe, visit our website www.nadhealthministries.org, email Katia.Reinert@nad.adventist.org or call (301) 680-6733.

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