



Exclusive interview with Carol Simontacchi, author of "Natural Alternatives to Vioxx, Celebrex and other Anti-Inflammatory Prescription Drugs"

Saturday, June 04, 2005 by: Mike Adams

Mike: We're here with Carol Simontacchi, author of "The Crazy Makers" and a new book entitled, "Natural Alternatives to Vioxx, Celebrex and other Anti-Inflammatory Prescription Drugs." Thanks for sitting down with us for a few minutes, Carol.

Simontacchi: Thank you. It's a pleasure.

Mike: What gave you the motivation to write this book? Why do you think it's important for people to read?

Simontacchi: Well, over my professional lifetime, I have developed a huge amount of skepticism about the pharmaceutical industry. It's gotten to the point where, when I see a new drug come out, I predict how many days it is before somebody kicks off. It's a huge amount of skepticism. Of course, with the tremendous amount of publicity that anti-inflammatory medications get, going back many, many years, it was just an accident waiting to happen. In my professional life, I do nutritional counseling and I will often ask people, "What meds are you on and what supplements are you on?" It is not unusual to see people put baby [aspirin](#) in the supplement column. That is how much of a hold pharmaceuticals have taken over people's lives. They think that something like baby aspirin is so benign that it goes in the supplements column.

Mike: So they don't think about gastrointestinal bleeding?

Simontacchi: That is exactly why Vioxx and [Celebrex](#) came off the market, because those medications caused bleeding and tremendous other problems. Now they're coming out with even stronger and more powerful medications than [Vioxx](#), not because they need to do that, but because they've run the market dry on Vioxx and Celebrex, and they're looking for new markets. We just knew it was going to happen. Something needed to be done because now they are connecting almost every disease category with [inflammation](#).

Mike: We've seen news on the C-reactive proteins, and they're saying that heart disease is all inflammation now.

Simontacchi: Yes, you start at the top and go all the way down. You've got Alzheimer's, dementia and certain forms of depression. Then you've got autism and all the attention deficit problems associated with inflammation. You've then got cardiovascular, metabolic syndrome, [obesity](#) and the joint pains. I mean it goes right from head to toe, and all of those major categories are related to inflammation.

Mike: So they're taking metabolic effects and trying to put them into disease categories in order to have new drugs come out to counter those in an allopathic method. Is that correct?

Simontacchi: An allopathic concept, yes. Realistically, I think they're right because inflammation is associated with that. The issue is that I like to look at what is causing this tremendous increase in inflammation, what is driving that. That was the impetus behind writing this book. We need to understand that we're doing this to ourselves. We're setting our own bodies on fire, so to speak.

Mike: Instead of having just an allopathic drug that masks the symptom of inflammation, you're saying that we need to ask, "What's underneath that inflammation, and how do we eliminate," -- not eliminate -- "but balance that?" Is that correct?

Simontacchi: Yes, and I think you could say "eliminate," because your body does not want to be chronically inflamed, but we're driving that. So, we're going to have to look at diet. We have to look at lifestyle. We have to look at physiology and anatomy. Sometimes we get out of place because of certain things. Then, we look at natural ways to pull down the inflammation.

Mike: Can you give maybe one or two tips or strategies that you reveal in the book? Or are you going to leave that for people to read it? Is there one highlight that you can share?

Simontacchi: Well, I'll ask you a question. What three foods contain the most calories consumed in this country? Sugar, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages. All three are pro-inflammatory. Then, you go to the red meat, which is pro-inflammatory. If you're an Atkins fan, you're setting your body on fire. But [if] you lean more to the vegetarian side, [and if] you eat a lot of pasta, grains, whole wheat, soy and you're fanatic about that, which also is pro-inflammatory. All of these major [food](#) paradigms that we look at are really pro-inflammatory.

Mike: In order to avoid all of that chronic inflammation, of course people have to start with their foods, and that's part of what you cover in your book?

Simontacchi: I do. I lay out an anti-inflammatory diet. I didn't want to approach it from a "don't eat this" perspective. I wanted to look at it kind of broadly. We look at the issue of pH balance, which is very important. We look at the issue of food allergies, which is extremely important. We look at oxalates. There are a number of different diet things we have to look at, and then I lay it out very simply: If you have an inflammatory thing going on, this is how you eat. This is what you eat because it's hard for people to figure it out for themselves.

Mike: Sure, do you also cover any nutritional supplements or herbal supplements?

Simontacchi: I do. I also cover lifestyle and stress, for example. Stress actually causes the body to miss the message to shut down the inflammation, so it just keeps it going. I talk about that, and also about supplements.

Mike: In the past few months, we've seen [the FDA](#) advisory panel make some rather precarious decisions on Vioxx, and part of the apparent reasoning of the panel was that they need to keep Vioxx and other Cox-2 inhibitors legal because people don't have alternatives. What are your thoughts on that?

Simontacchi: You see, that's not true. That really is not true, because there are some excellent anti-inflammatory herbal products, mineral products [and] oil products that have really good research behind them to show that they work just as well as the non-steroidal [anti-inflammatory drugs](#). I talk about those in the book. I didn't list all of them -- it's a little book -- but we have a really good selection to make in that.

Mike: Indeed. Can I call you a critic of the pharmaceutical industry?

Simontacchi: You can call me a very cynical critic instead.

Mike: Okay, great. I have to ask you because when I saw that decision by the panel it made me wonder, "What is the threshold of danger or safety now for [prescription drugs](#)?" That bar has certainly been raised high with the number of deaths from Vioxx.

Simontacchi: Yes, they're looking at 140,000 adverse events from Vioxx and Celebrex.

Mike: Do you see that as being a dangerous precedent by the FDA? What's your take on it?

Simontacchi: Again, you're asking me to talk about my own cynicism. It's based on dollars. I think the bean counters get together, figure out how many people are likely to die or have an adverse event, how much that's going to cost them and whether or not it pays off in the long run to keep the drug on the market. Now, from a consumer perspective, what they're asking people to do is to choose between chronic, horrifying pain or heart attack. That is not a good choice.

Mike: Right.

Simontacchi: I'm saying that's not the only choice you've been given. I'm saying you can shut down the inflammation without jeopardizing your heart.

Mike: Shifting gears, do you have some other titles in the works or soon to be published?

Simontacchi: I do actually, yes. I have another book. It's a major book, called "Weight Success for a Lifetime." It is a holistic approach to handling weight, and it was so interesting because this book has been in the making for about five years. It's a workbook that takes you through 48 weeks of many influences on weight management. Guess what was coming out when I was putting the final touches on this book? It was the whole connection between inflammation and obesity, and that was one thing that I had not picked up before.

Mike: Interesting.

Simontacchi: So, this is going to be an important book.

Mike: What's the title of that going to be?

Simontacchi: "Weight Success for a Lifetime."

Mike: Okay, on what website can people go to get more information about your books?

Simontacchi: Well, go to www.inflammationnews.com, which points you in that whole direction of the [anti-inflammatories](#). I've got a newsletter on that.

Mike: Your books are, of course, available in all the standard book distribution channels?

Simontacchi: Yes, and if they want a signed copy, [they can] just ask when they go onto my website.

Mike: Perfect. Carol, thank you very much for spending time with us.

Simontacchi: It's been a pleasure.