Dr. Roy Walford, Anti-Aging Research Pioneer

The recent passing of Roy Walford, MD, will be felt in the life extension community for years to come.

Dr. Walford, professor emeritus of pathology at UCLA, was a pioneer in life extension research. Over the course of a remarkable career, he became a leading authority on the biology of aging and the use of caloric restriction to combat the effects of aging and disease. Dr. Walford authored several best-selling books, including *Maximum Life Span*, *Beyond the 120 Year Diet: How to Double Your Vital Years*, and *The Anti-Aging Plan: Strategies and Recipes for Extending Your Healthy Years*. He also published more than 300 scientific articles and was the recipient of numerous awards.

Dr. Walford's research focused on the biology and mechanics of aging from the standpoints of immunology and molecular biology. He discovered that restricting caloric intake in laboratory mice by about 50% could more than double their normal life span. Later human studies showed that caloric restriction could lower blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol.

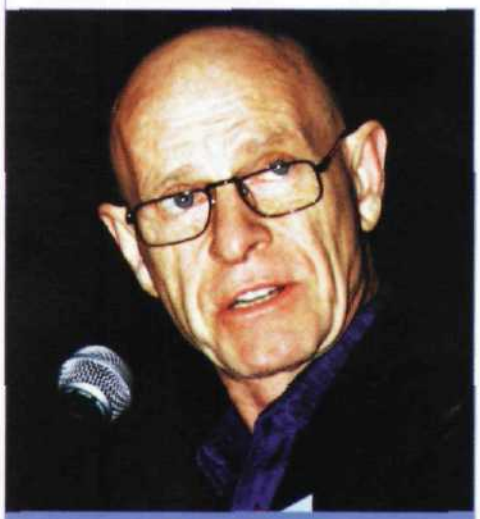
Dr. Walford applied his theory to his own life; for the last 30 years of his life, he consumed only 1,600 calories a day, far below the recommended calorie intake for a man of his age.

In 1991, Dr. Walford applied the low-calorie diet in the experimental Biosphere 2, a three-acre self-contained greenhouse in the Arizona desert. He and seven other researchers sealed themselves for two years in the closed ecological system. When food supplies ran low, Dr. Walford encouraged the others to follow a calorie-restricted diet, which produced dramatic weight loss and improved health.

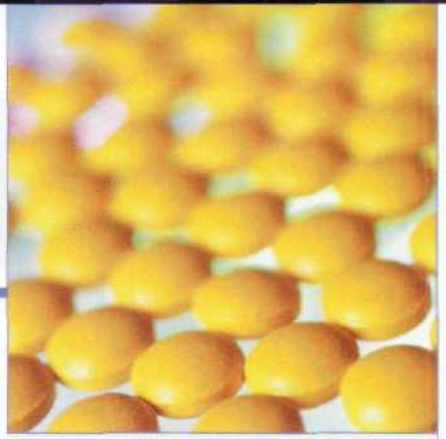
Dr. Walford died in April from respiratory failure and complications from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He was 79.

As best we can recall, Dr. Walford is the first member of Life Extension's Scientific Advisory Board to pass away. We did lose a doctor on our Medical Advisory Board to a rock climbing accident about 10 years ago.

—Stephen Laifer



Dr. Roy Walford



Acetaminophen Use Harms Kidneys

Long-term use of acetaminophen has been linked to kidney impairment, according to a study of analgesic use among middle-aged women.*

Over the course of 11 years, 10% of study participants experienced about a one-third drop in their kidney filtration rate. The nearly 1,700 women recruited for the study were habitual users of the common painkiller, which is marketed both generically and as Tylenol®.

Life Extension has warned its readers about this hazard for more than a decade. The researchers stressed that other common NSAID painkillers, such as ibuprofen and aspirin, have not been associated with any adverse effects on kidney function. Only acetaminophen was linked to kidney damage in the current study.

The study results showed that women who took 1,500-9,000 acetaminophen tablets over their lifetimes had a 64% greater chance of developing kidney malfunctions. Women who took more than 9,000 pills doubled that risk.

The women, who participated in the Nurses' Health Study, contributed blood samples in 1989 and again in 2000. Samples were analyzed for changes in markers of glomerular filtration rate, an indicator of kidney health and efficiency.

Researchers note that more and more people are taking over-the-counter pain relievers for chronic pain and to guard against cardiovascular disease and stroke. Use of NSAIDS has been linked to a reduction in cardiovascular disease risk. The study findings suggest that physicians and their patients should reassess the advisability of routinely using acetaminophen.

—Dale Kiefer

Reference

* Curhan GC, Knight EL, Rosner B, Hankinson SE, Stampfer MJ. Lifetime nonnarcotic analgesic use and decline in renal function in women. *Arch Int Med.* 2004 Jul 26;164(14):1519-24.