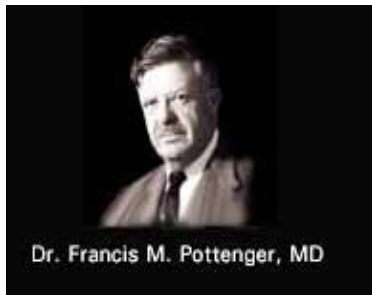


## NEWS AND VIEWS

### CHRIS SAILS, ND



Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., MD

**Background:** Dr. Pottenger was an original thinker and a keen observer who had great imagination, integrity and common sense that gave him the courage to practice what he believed. Dedicated to the cause of preventing degenerative health disorders and other chronic illness, he made significant contributions to the understanding of the role of nutrition in maintaining good health. Even though he specialized in pulmonary medicine, he took a keen interest in nutrition. He devoted most of his time studying degenerative diseases in relation to nutrition. His famous study called Pottenger's cats made him known worldwide.

#### THE LIFE OF FRANCIS M. POTTENGER, JR., MD.

Francis M. Pottenger, Jr., born in 1901 was the son of the physician who founded the once famous Pottenger

Sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis in Monrovia, California.

He completed his residency at Los Angeles County Hospital in 1930. He became a full-time assistant at the Sanatorium. From 1932 to 1942, he also conducted what became known as the Pottenger Cat Study. In 1940, he founded the Francis M Pottenger, Jr. Hospital at Monrovia. Until closing in 1960, the hospital specialized in treating non-tubercular diseases of the lung, especially asthma.

He served as president of several professional organizations, including the Los Angeles County Medical Association, the American Academy of Applied Nutrition and the American Therapeutic Society.

He died in 1967.

#### POTTENGER CAT STUDY

Whenever most people hear the name Francis Pottenger, they automatically think of Pottenger's Cat Studies. The cat studies were most valuable for their contributions to understanding the influences of certain nutrients and lack of certain nutrients on processes of growth, reproduction and degenerative conditions.

In his classical experiments in cat feeding, more than 900 cats were studied over 10 years. Dr. Pottenger found that only diets containing raw milk and raw meat produced optimal health in these experimental subjects: good bone structure and density, wide palates with plenty of space for teeth, shiny fur, no parasites or disease, reproductive ease and gentleness. In the period 1932-1942, Dr. Francis Pottenger conducted a series of feeding experiments on cats investigating the effects of cooked and raw foods on these cats.

He discovered that cooking the meat or substituting heat processed milk for raw resulted in heterogeneous reproduction and physical degeneration, increasing with each generation. Skin diseases and allergies increased from 5% to over 90%. Bones became soft and pliable. Cats suffered from adverse personality changes, hypothyroidism and most of the degenerative diseases encountered in human medicine. They died out completely by the fourth generation. One particular question that Pottenger addressed in his study has to do with the nutritive value of heat-labile elements—nutrients destroyed by heat and available only in raw foods.

Pottenger's cats compared in a 10-15 year study: cats who were fed raw meat and raw milk that were healthy, to cats fed cooked food. By the 3rd and 4th generation, the health of the second group of cats was really compromised. They had arthritis, eye problems, skin problems and couldn't reproduce by the 4th and 5th generation. Dr. Pottenger also observed that cats fed on a cooked diet developed a number of pathologies, some of which were remarkably similar to certain diseases that we see today in humans, whereas cats eating raw food didn't suffer from these problems.

He applied the principles of nutrition and endocrinology early in his practice. Dr. Pottenger was a pioneer in using crude extracts of the adrenal cortex for allergic states and the syndrome of depletion. In his treatment of respiratory diseases such as TB, asthma, allergies and emphysema, he emphasized proper diet based on the principles discovered by Weston Price. At his sanatorium in Monrovia, California he served liberal amounts of liver, butter, cream and eggs to convalescing patients. He also gave supplements of adrenal cortex to treat exhaustion.

Pottenger carefully delineated in his *Symptoms Of Visceral Disease*, the relationship of nutrition to the sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions of the autonomic nervous system. Further, he illuminated the autonomic influences as essential components in defining metabolic individuality. He was very interested in the study of autonomic nervous system as to how the autonomic nervous system consisting of both sympathetic and parasympathetic branches control metabolism.

Although a few of the details of the Pottenger cat study might not meet current research standards, it appears that at the time the work was done, Pottenger's study was probably the best one.

The papers published from his research have been compiled and edited and released as Pottenger [1995] and is

available as a reprint from the Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation. "Pottenger's Cats: A Study in Nutrition", ISBN 0916764060

Contact Price-Pottenger Foundation for more information [Price-Pottenger Nutritional Foundation P.O.Box 2614 La Mesa, CA 91943-2614 619-574-7763.

## CONCLUSION

Dr. Pottenger was the first who suspected abnormal nutrition in connection with various degenerative health disorders in humans. His pioneer work on cats helped him watch the changes in many generations in his experimental subjects and prove his theory, because cats lived only for a short time compared to humans. If he had to do the experiments on humans, he knew he couldn't prove his theory in one lifetime. He paved the way for many nutritional researchers to investigate further into the subject and discover the effects of nutrition in humans. If it was not for his discovery and the proof of the results he provided to the world through the cat study, our nutritional science may be still living in infancy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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