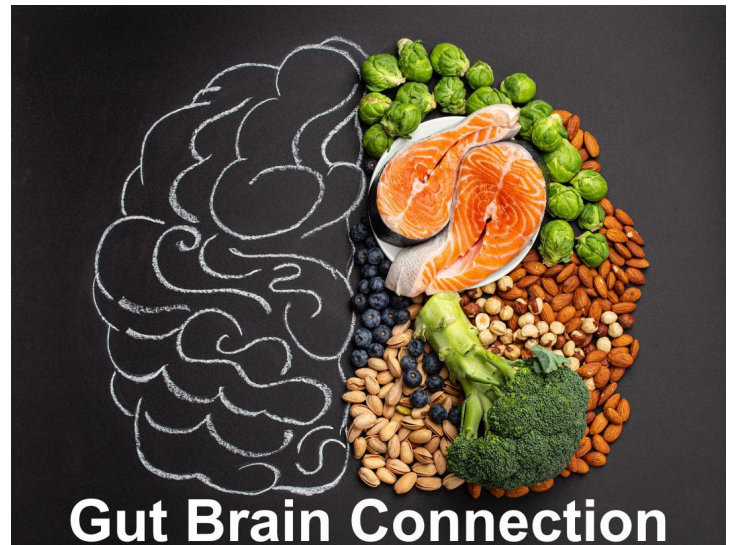


GUT AND BRAIN TRAVEL IS ROUND TRIP

By Anne Scherer

If you think you'll travel to examine the brain and also the gut (which is the colon, intestines, stomach lining, good and bad bacteria, microbes and more) you will need a round trip ticket because they are bidirectional.

I interviewed Iowa Parkinson's Conference speaker, Dr. Richard Manfready, and he was truly riveting. Dr. Manfready is a physician-scientist who specializes in disorders of the gut brain axis. His lab has made discoveries connecting Parkinson's disease with GI disorders and has translated the findings to benefit patients.



So, continuing our journey, it is revealed to us that the gut and the brain are inexorably connected. Parkinson's disease is known to have distorted proteins which clump together and destroy brain neurons. However, in 2008, study data hypothesized that this protein misfolding could begin outside the brain and first in the gut. This was not taken very seriously until recently when the collected data could no longer be ignored. Dr. Manfready is a major player in this cutting edge research. The question posed is: What causes proteins to clump and could diet translate to unfolding?

It is not a clear cut path to the answer because to be considered are a myriad of factors, the biggest being the cause of the inevitable inflammation present in the gut. Then, what role do the microbial changes, environmental factors, along with chemicals and heavy metals play?

We know that there are 100 trillion microbes in us and that the likely culprit in gut inflammation is an overactive immune system which is what it is because we lack the bacteria to provide signals to the brain. This study is focusing on correcting this through diet. DR Manfready makes it clear that food is medicine.

His food recommendations and diet will be in his presentation. They are not unattainable. They are doable and are the fast moving area of research aimed at repurposing the gut without pharmaceuticals including your prebiotics and probiotics.

Dr. Mafready's passion is contagious, however, he makes this point clear: This research is not a cure. It is another tool to slow progress and possibly stave off symptoms if started early in the Parkinson's journey.

Finally, to feel better and not suffer horrendous stomach issues by controlling our food intake would be a diamond in the tiara of these studies.