

Experts debate anti-omega-6 stance

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A NEW book claiming seed oils “will kill you” because of their harmful omega-6 fatty acids is based on cherry-picked data, experts say.

The author of *Toxic Oil*, David Gillespie, said Australians’ consumption of dangerous fats had increased substantially since 1996 with canola oil, containing 20% omega-6 fats, now representing 45% of vegetable oils consumed.

Science suggested polyunsaturated fats were linked to many cancers and autoimmune diseases, he said.

He cited the Los Angeles Veterans Trial completed in 1969, which showed heart disease-related events were similar between groups eating seed oil and animal fat, but fatal cancers were double in the seed oil group.



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Professor Simon Stewart, head of preventive cardiology at the Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute, said selective data was not a substitute for hard evidence.

“I don’t think we can use guilt by association,” he said. “You could cherry-pick some data... but most of us rely on large scale evidence. I don’t think there’s

mainstream evidence as yet that the omega-6s are particularly harmful.”

Mr Gillespie, a lawyer and “health crusader”, rejected suggestions he was selectively using data.

“That’s not cherry-picking because there have only been three controlled heart disease

trials where they have tried substituting [fats] like that,” he told *MO*.

“Seed oils have only been in our diet since 1920. It’s irrational for the National Heart Foundation or anyone else to blame modern diseases like cancer and heart disease at epidemic proportions on ancient foods [like animal fats].”

The Heart Foundation said a healthy balanced diet reduced the risk of heart disease, adding a balanced diet “does not involve cutting out any food group entirely”.

“Quoting selective research... attacking our integrity won’t dissuade us from this cause,” it said.

Toxic Oil: Why Vegetable Oil Will Kill You & How to Save Yourself (Viking, 2013)