

# Preface

**About 25 years ago, I almost gave my cardiologist a heart attack.**

I was a young man in my late 30's in a very stressful job — a Cabinet Minister in my country, with a 12–14 hour work day. As a responsibility to my electorate in particular, and to the public in general, I started the practice of an annual routine multi-phasic medical checkup.

On one of those visits, my exercise induced electro-cardiogram (stress-

EKG) showed severe ST abnormalities. My cardiologist stopped the test right away, as such abnormalities frequently precede a heart attack. Numerous other tests were conducted, including the ultimate “gold standard” test — the invasive angiogram, where a flexible fine wire-like probe was inserted into a vein in the groin, and threaded up, slowly and carefully, into the heart itself. Then an

opaque dye was injected into the heart itself, and the X-ray picture of the blood flow was displayed on the TV in front of me. The TV picture showed clearly the state of the arteries of the heart.

Nothing damages the reputation of a cardiologist more than to have a young patient under his care die of a heart attack! The matter will be made worse, if the patient is a public figure — with all the attendant negative publicity.

After extensive consultation with other specialists (and later with my results sent to top specialists at the Stanford Medical Center, California, USA, my cardiologists' final conclusion was that my severe ST abnormalities were “false positives” — i.e. the results were positive indicators of heart disease, but as the

experts collectively could not attribute them to any specific known factor or factors, my cardiologists concluded that they were “false”.

As a trained research scientist myself, familiar with interpreting complex experimental data, my own conclusion was that the results were symptomatic of a problem or problems that medical science could not identify at that time. (My cardiologist kindly lent me his cardiology textbooks, which I read diligently, as my own life was at stake.)

Over the years, I went for my annual checkups faithfully.\* As advancing technology brought new diagnostic tools, they were used on me. I had numerous tests, including the “thallium test”, “ultrasonic echo-cardiogram”, “sestamibi

technetium-99 isotope test”, and the latest angiograms with even higher resolutions than before.

My severe ST abnormalities continue to manifest themselves year after year, showing clearly (to me, at least) that something fundamental is not alright with my heart.

Having survived these 25 years (in spite of an occasional scare or two), I believe my ST abnormalities had been a blessing in disguise. With such ST abnormalities, I take my health seriously. I read everything on nutrition that crosses my path, on exercise, on heart diseases, on all the statins, and on the latest treatments for heart problems.

I love eating — who doesn't? Initially

in the overweight zone, my Body Mass Index (BMI) was way past 25, the acceptable healthy norm. I had to discipline myself, to exercise a little, and to cut down on fatty, salty and sweet food, to bring my cholesterol level down from about 300 milligram/millilitre to 240.<sup>†</sup> My BMI also came down to below 25.

\*During my annual medical checkups, we caught two incidents of “retinal detachment” in time before greater tearing and damage to my eyes occurred. This was a bonus.

<sup>†</sup>Twenty years ago, 240 for total cholesterol was considered satisfactory. Today I keep my total cholesterol way below 200.

Progressively as new and healthier habits take root, they became less onerous, less of a chore. Today, the healthier lifestyle is just a routine, my daily standard operating procedure.

Over these 25 years, many of my friends, some younger than me, have had cardiac by-passes. Others are luckier; they just had multiple stents put in them. One friend's heart stopped when the doctors were putting in his second series of stents in three years. Fortunately, they revived him in time with massive electric shocks — which burnt his chest (chest burns are not normally shown in ER shows on TV!) A few other less lucky friends have passed on.

Living with my ST abnormalities over the past 25 years, I have adopted and evolved

my own diet and exercise regime. I do not believe everything I read (neither should you). I test what I read against my own knowledge and database. I have also shared this knowledge with my friends, since I read a lot more about such matters than they do. I have explained my approach countless times to friends and acquaintances. I believe the rudiments of my approach may be of some interest to others. Some three years ago, I wrote it all down. Then I got distracted and went off to write and publish three math books.‡

## A<sub>2z</sub>

Recently a friend asked me what happened to my book. So here it is — this little booklet, with the simplest yet effective diet.

# T.H.E. A<sub>2z</sub> Diet

Albert Einstein said:

“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.”

I agree. Therefore, I have simplified my approach to health down to the barest but effective minimum, what mathematicians would call the “necessary and sufficient” conditions. I call it **T.H.E. A<sub>2z</sub> Diet**.

Dieting is a very individualistic activity. If **T.H.E. A<sub>2z</sub> Diet** works for you (as it does for me), fine — stay with it and make it part of your daily routine. If not, try another approach, bearing in mind that the fundamental principles of **T**, **H** and **E** are absolutely essential.

Your health is too important for you to surrender to inertia, and do nothing about. **Have fun, and good health to you.**

1. “The Pleasures of Pi, e, and Other Interesting Numbers”;
2. “Are You the King or Are You the Joker”; and
3. “Trig or Treat”.