

PREVIEW_ Eric Kossoff - Presentation (Breckenridge 2018) 1

Dr. Eric Kossoff: So the idea of using diets or fasting for epilepsy goes very, very far back probably 400 BC with Hippocrates. And they really didn't even know what seizures were back then. They thought maybe it was possession or demonic possession.

They really weren't sure, but they knew that periods of starvation would help. They thought maybe that was ill humors and that by not giving foods that would provide those ill humors, patients would get better.

And it actually worked if you sort of read these articles way back. These references from Hippocrates, they talk about prolonged periods of fasting being helpful. And then Galen in 200 BC was a little more specific again getting to ungendered humors that may be necessarily negative.

We didn't know exactly what was going on back then. This is where a lot of people think sort of the reference of using ketogenic diets for epilepsy goes back to.

But again it was probably 400 years earlier but the widely described references from Jesus in Mark 9, where they talked about an adult who had what appears to be childhood-onset epilepsy, they didn't know what it was, the patient had a convulsion on the ground and Jesus's prescription was prayer and fasting. Neither are bad ideas.

And it worked, so they knew about this for hundreds of years even through the Middle Ages that periods of abstinence for whatever this condition was seemed to be beneficial.