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Dr. Gifford Jones

# The Doctor Game – W. Gifford-Jones M.D.

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## The Fart Pill : Could It Get The Nobel Prize ?

Could hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), the gas that causes the odour of farts, ever receive the Nobel Prize in Medicine? Dr. Rui Wang, an internationally known Canadian researcher, reports that we may have a fart pill that fights one of our great killers, hypertension.

Passing flatus affects Kings, Queens and the rest of us. Who hasn't been at a dinner party when we'd prefer to be in the Sahara Desert so we could pass flatus? It's also hard to research how much flatus is normal. After all, no doctor wants to say, "I'm a specialist in farts." But research reveals that most people fart 15 to 25 times a day.

Dr. Wang has been studying hydrogen sulfide for years since his daughter's rotten egg emitted it. We know it's bacteria in the bowel that produces the obnoxious smell of hydrogen sulfide. Now, Dr. Wang has discovered an enzyme which produces H<sub>2</sub>S. Since it also dilates arteries thereby decreasing blood pressure, so maybe a fart pill!

So with such an offensive background how could hydrogen sulfide achieve a Nobel Prize? In 1998 three U.S. researchers discovered another magic molecule, nitric oxide (NO). And like hydrogen sulfide it also relaxes arteries, decreasing blood pressure and fighting hypertension. They won the Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Dr Nathan S. Bryan, at the University of Texas, is a world authority on NO. He says that early in life we produce large amounts of NO in the inner lining of arteries. This keeps arteries expanded to allow a good supply of oxygen to all organs.

But after age 40 nitric oxide decreases, arteries constrict causing hypertension, and this increased pressure injures the inner wall of coronary arteries. This results in an inflammatory reaction that kills a North American every 37 seconds making heart attack the nation's number one killer.

Bryan adds this interesting fact. Nitric oxide first attained star status as treatment of erectile dysfunction. This is because ED is cured by drugs that produce NO, sending increased amounts of blood to the male organ.

This discovery has resulted in a natural remedy called Neo40, which produces nitric oxide, available in Health Food Stores. Since I have had coronary problems Neo40 is now a daily part of my routine as I need relaxed coronary arteries. And it may help some patients suffering from angina.

Dr. Bryan suggests one tablet twice a day for two weeks to slowly dissolve in the mouth. Then one daily after there's a good blood level of NO.

I found it interesting that Dr. Wang has H<sub>2</sub>S detectors in his lab that he calls fart detectors, as hydrogen sulfide can be deadly in large doses. This means that rectal gas is potentially explosive!

One patient ignored advice to take an enema before a sigmoidoscopic examination to remove a colon polyp. When the polyp was cauterized to control bleeding the H<sub>2</sub>S gas caused an explosion. This created a six inch tear in the large bowel!

I do not know of any remedy that eradicates farting. It's a part of living and ,in fact, not passing flatus may be harmful. For instance, Dr Wynne-Jones, a New Zealand physician, reported years ago that being polite results in herniations of the large bowel (diverticulosis) due to constant pressure of gas.

His advice was to fart whenever necessary. I never did get a chance to interview Dr. Wynne-Jones. But I would have loved to ask him whether friends ever invited him back to their dinner parties.

Fortunately, most flatus is odourless. However, hydrogen sulfide can be detected as low as one part in a million. Remember this fact at the next dinner party.

Finally, although farts can be embarrassing, hypertension and heart attacks can kill. I have no idea when Dr Wang's fart pill will become a reality. But if it does become available, it will be another natural remedy like Neo40, to treat erectile dysfunction and the major killer, hypertension. And Dr. Wang may also receive a Nobel Prize.



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