

## Dr. Kenneth Blanchard's False Beliefs About T<sub>3</sub> Therapy

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Yesterday, January 10, 2008, I received the following question from a person expressing concern about his use of T<sub>3</sub> alone. I'm responding to his question in this newsletter because I often receive similar emails expressing the same concern. Their concern always arises because of an opinion of some doctors about the use of T<sub>3</sub> alone. The doctors' opinion is wrong, as I explain in my reply to this troubled gentleman.

**Question:** I'm a confused thyroid patient. Thyroid experts say so many things that conflict with what others say that I don't know who to believe. Armour and Levoxyl didn't work for me, so my doctor, who has read your studies on T<sub>3</sub>, has been treating me with Cytomel for several years. It gave my life back. Last night, however, I read Dr. Kenneth Blanchard's answer to a woman named Annie who asked him how he feels about prescribing T<sub>3</sub>. If he is right, I'm afraid I'm heading for trouble with Cytomel. I am concerned, so I'll be grateful if you'll respond to his answer to Annie:<sup>[1]</sup>

The important thing in prescribing a thyroid hormone is that you have to attain the right T<sub>3</sub> in the body. I don't think that anyone is well served by using T<sub>3</sub> only. Dr. Wilson published a book in 1991 called *Wilson's Syndrome*. This book is interesting in that it has many pages of glowing testimonial letters. The problem is that T<sub>3</sub> slowly lowers the balance in the body. T<sub>4</sub> levels fall slowly in the tissues. *The patient feels better for a few months but then they [sic] crash. I guarantee that no one can take only T<sub>3</sub> for very long.* [Italics mine.]

**Dr. Lowe:** First I want to say that I admire Dr. Blanchard, an endocrinologist, for some of his points of view. In the first edition of Mary Shomon's *Living Well with Hypothyroidism*,<sup>[2]</sup> Dr. Blanchard and I

were the two doctors she heavily quoted. Since reading some of his statements in her book, I've felt that he is courageous for thinking outside the fault-laden belief-box of conventional endocrinology. Some of his beliefs are scientifically sound.

That said, I want to emphasize that his statements about using T<sub>3</sub> alone are balderdash. I simply don't understand how he could publicly express such nonsense.

Dr. Blanchard refers to Dr. Denis Wilson's book containing "glowing testimonials" about T<sub>3</sub> therapy. I will give you a testimonial of my own, but first let me make something clear: In my book *The Metabolic Treatment of Fibromyalgia*,<sup>[3]</sup> I document that some of Dr. Wilson's beliefs are so contrary to scientific evidence that they are simply nutty—as nutty as Dr. Blanchard's beliefs about T<sub>3</sub> therapy. Except for Dr. Wilson's advocacy of T<sub>3</sub> therapy, I adamantly disagree with many of his views. On the other hand, my own testimonial about T<sub>3</sub> could fit right into his book.

My testimonial about using T<sub>3</sub> alone makes Dr. Blanchard patently wrong or me psychotically deluded. He wrote in his answer to Annie that he doesn't think anyone is well served by using T<sub>3</sub> alone. Despite that, we have a massive research literature on patients with thyroid hormone resistance. That literature shows that most of the patients are served well by no thyroid hormone therapy other than T<sub>3</sub> alone. If Dr. Blanchard questions this, he should read my extensive chapter in *The Metabolic Treatment of Fibromyalgia*<sup>[3]</sup> on the science and treatment of thyroid hormone resistance.

Here, though, I'll say that T<sub>3</sub> alone has served me very well for twenty-three years. My father and some of his siblings committed suicide, and I'm convinced that their deaths were from depression due to thyroid hormone resistance. He took his own life at age twenty-eight only three years after T<sub>3</sub> was discovered, so the hormone wasn't available clinically to

avert his early demise. I have been more fortunate. Unlike my father, I had the help of a wise psychiatrist and the research conducted by psychiatric investigators in the 1970s. That research showed the effectiveness of T<sub>3</sub> therapy in relieving many patients' depression. Because of my long-term use of T<sub>3</sub> alone, I've long been free from the desire to exterminate myself—a desire that dominated half my thoughts from my earliest memories as a boy until I began using T<sub>3</sub> alone.

Is Dr. Blanchard right and I psychotically out of touch with reality? Have I not been “well served by using T<sub>3</sub> only”? I'll put it this way: Before my use of T<sub>3</sub>, I was crippled at doing math, as well as most other intellectual tasks. Since using T<sub>3</sub> alone, my major past time has been the highly technical practice of mathematical logic. In this practice, I reduce arguments to symbolic notation using quantifiers and analyze them for validity using rules of inference. I do this in a quantificational language that would take most highly intelligent people years to learn, as it did me. Dr. Blanchard would undoubtedly argue that my long use of T<sub>3</sub> has impaired my mental faculties. But the truth is, T<sub>3</sub> has given me a razor-sharp mind; I know this from the brief times I've been off T<sub>3</sub>. Each time, the familiar thick mental fog ensheaths me again, causing me to back away from my dry erase boards, unable to quantitatively express and analyze arguments. In view of this personal history, I humbly contend that it is Dr. Blanchard who is wrong.

I want to repeat a statement he made in his reply to Annie: “*The patient feels better for a few months but then they [sic] crash. I guarantee that no one can take only T<sub>3</sub> for very long.*” [Italics mine.] As a thyroid hormone resistance researcher, I have for many years followed patients who have used T<sub>3</sub> alone,

some for up to seventeen years. And, of course, I've followed myself for a full twenty three. Have we “crashed,” as Dr. Blanchard claims we inevitably will? Absolutely not! My follow-up of long-term T<sub>3</sub> users shows that most are healthier than people in general. And this is true of myself now within two weeks of the age of sixty-two.

Dr. Blanchard's “guarantee that no one can take only T<sub>3</sub> for very long” is as concretely false as the claim that the earth is flat. At the time he made his should-be-embarrassing statements about T<sub>3</sub>, he apparently hadn't bothered to read the scientific literature that proves him wrong. But that's okay; I always stand ready to show him that my long-term use of T<sub>3</sub> alone has not in the least hampered my health and vigor. I'm always ready to arm wrestle him or take him on in a long race up the side of any mountain. However, rather than arm wrestling or racing, he would do better to study *The Metabolic Treatment of Fibromyalgia*,<sup>[3]</sup> or at least the T<sub>3</sub> literature in *PubMed*. If he did, he would probably revise his beliefs about the use of T<sub>3</sub>. By doing so, he would far better serve the interests of patients like you.

At any rate, I hope you don't let Dr. Blanchard's mistaken beliefs instill you with fear. And I sincerely wish you the very best with the extraordinary health you're likely to enjoy, as I have, through your continued use of T<sub>3</sub> alone.

## References

1. Blanchard, K.: <http://www.power-surge.com/transcripts/blanchard.htm>.
2. Shomon, M.: *Living Well with Hypothyroidism*. New York, Avon Books, Inc., 2000.
3. Lowe, J.C.: *The Metabolic Treatment of Fibromyalgia*. Boulder, McDowell Publishing Co., 2000.