Opening: Meat-heavy diets and the Maasai example

should be good people often say that our ancestors ate mostly meat and they did just fine but the data tells a different story take the messiah known for eating mostly meet dairy and even blood for years they were held up as proof positive that a meat heavy diet to protect against heart disease however a new review by david goldman that's simply not the case the Messiah showed high LDL cholesterol levels No, it didn't.

Cholesterol claims and the first rebuttal

Your own review stated that when they observed eating a traditional Maasai diet, their main cholesterol was 135, and they have a historically low incidence rate of heart disease.

Which destroys your narrative that eating high saturated fat leads to high cholesterol, which causes heart diseases. Well, I'm one of the authors on that paper.

And I will acknowledge that RIP was incorrect about cholesterol levels. They were suboptimal, but not necessarily high in some of studies that looked at them.

But no, this does not destroy the narrative that diets high in saturated fat cause heart disease. The Messiah have genetic adaptations for more efficient cholesterol metabolism, they tend to eat very little overall, and they often suffer from infections that can lower cholesterol levels, among other factors.

Authors clarify the review and LDL context

And this was stated right in the very screenshot that he shared. Funny enough, the last time that I pointed out he cherry-picked sentences out of papers, he blocked me.

I'm another author of this paper, and Matt's right. We actually reported in the review that the traditional Maasai didn't typically have high cholesterol despite eating diets high in saturated fat.

But that only highlights how the diet of the unique population really shouldn't be used as a blueprint for modern-day Western societies, because we know when we study diverse populations today, eating diet's high saturated fats does reliably increase LDL cholesterol.

Even the self-selected online carnivore survey found that to be the case. Early signs of atherosclerosis and widespread nutrient deficiencies, including anemia and low levels of vitamins A, C, and D.

Why the Maasai diet is not a modern blueprint

And now we're just being downright disingenuous. Again, your own review stated that government-funded ranching programs in the 60s and 70s drastically changed the Maasai diet, leading to a much higher intake of refined grains, processed sugars.

The comment about government funded ranch programs was from our introduction explaining why we were focusing on Maasi consuming their traditional diets.

not those consuming more modern, refined grain and sugar-rich diets. Talk about being disingenuous. And even if the men who were found to have significant atherosclerosis comparable to older men in Western populations had shifted their diet, that would have been a recent change and athroscorosis takes decades to develop.

Atherosclerosis, lifespan, and disease progression

So most of it would've progressed while consuming their traditional diet. Plus, as we highlighted in the review, a minority of Masai men consuming the traditional diet did have higher total cholesterol levels, and autopsies did reveal atherosclerosis.

But this rarely progressed to complications such as plaque rupture or thrombosis, because the leading causes of death were combat and infection, significantly reducing lifespan.

So athroscleroses rarely had a chance to progress and manifest as cardiovascular disease, which is typically seen in older populations. In fact, the nutrient deficiencies that you're referring to are based on a study in the 80s where the diet consisted of 80% carbohydrates, mostly coming from a thin porridge made from maize flour.

Dietary deficiencies and the final critique

The data on nutrient deficiency wasn't based a single study and that study he just highlighted wasn' even from the 1980s, it was from 2014. We clearly listed three references in that section he highlighted and another later on in paper.

It's also notable that women and children tended to only consume meat occasionally, and they focused far more on milk and maize as staples. So the reported dietary intake is still reflective of their traditional diet.

The real question isn't whether one pastoralist population appeared relatively protected. It is whether adopting a diet that raises LDL cholesterol levels is safe across populations.

And based on genetic and observational studies, as well as randomized controlled trials, the answer is no. Using the traditional Maasai to justify high saturated fat diets today is a dangerous appeal to nature fallacy, and it's clearly not rooted in any credible science.