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Reading room treats

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The superiority of chocolate, both for health and nourishment, will soon give it the same preference over tea and coffee in America which it has in Spain.

—Thomas Jefferson,
in a letter to John Adams, 1785

My career and medical training started in Virginia. In Charlottesville, townspeople still talk about Mr. Jefferson like he's just gone away for the weekend and will be back in the office on Monday. Everyone acts like he is still involved in everything. You hear things like, "Man, TJ is not going to be happy with that new building going up downtown." TJ had a pretty serious love of good food, wine, and chocolate.

We radiologists often spend the day in our reading rooms; for the majority of us, they are our workplace. We may have offices, and we may occasionally get to them, pick up mail, or answer a call, but the fact is, we work in the reading room. And, as we have all found of late, we rarely leave. We eat lunch there, we drink coffee and get snacks without a step from the desk, and usually spend very little time not in direct contact with the keyboard and monitor. You want us? Come to the

reading room. So, late in the afternoon, work is still piling up, you're starting to fade a little ... it's time for a pick-me-up. Candy. Maybe, candy and some caffeine. What do you keep in your reading room?

We go for chocolate. We keep bags of it. I have learned what true strength is: It's just eating one or two of those things and not ruining my dinner by gorging on them. The other benefit of this chocolate-infusion system is the camaraderie that we experience with clinicians who visit to "consult" with us. I know why they come to the reading room. They are returning for the chocolate. It is a pilgrimage. They filled their pockets the day before and the day before that, and they are coming back for more.

Pavlov would have certainly understood. I know what their priority is before a word is spoken. If they look to the chocolate bag before they announce they want to review something, they are on the chocolate hunt. The case they want to look at is subsidiary.

I think this is fine and I don't mind sharing (too much). And, when I venture to their clinics or space to do a conference or look at images, I find their stash as well. I have pockets, too.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo

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