

Holistic Medicine In Ireland

The remarkable feature of this growth is that it has been created by popular demand, often in the face of opposition by the establishment. People have literally "voted with their feet" - even in countries like Britain where they have had to pay fees to holistic practitioners as opposed to free treatment on the National Health Service. Recent figures from the British Medical Association show that 35% of G.P.s currently refer patients to "complementary" therapists for a wide range of illnesses, and that 80% of junior doctors want to train in the holistic field. And in America, seven states have introduced legislation registering doctors of natural science (naturopaths) who are licensed to treat patients in the same way as family doctors.

In Ireland, holistic medicine is young and expanding rapidly and the Irish Health Culture Association and the Irish Association of Holistic Medicine have led the field in training and representing holistic practitioners.

So what is holistic medicine and why has it proved so popular?

In traditional western medicine you went to see your doctor when you were sick - you were given your medication or you were sent for tests and/or you went into hospital for an operation. It was all in his hands and the often confused patient just did not ask questions. Today everybody questions everything. We are not content with being "in the dark", nor do we see ourselves as a heart, a lung, or a throat case, but as a complete person. We have outgrown the view of ourselves as a machine whose parts have broken down. Holistic medicine, on the other hand, deals with the whole person on all levels of their being - body, mind and spirit. Its aim is to integrate the person, to put them back in touch with their own life source. A branch fresh from a tree will exude sap, but after a few weeks it dries up and withers. So too as human beings, we naturally

The last decade has seen phenomenal growth worldwide in the field of holistic medicine. In Britain, holistic medicine has become the second largest growth industry after computers, with the number of practitioners equalling the number of G.P.s and rising. In America surveys show that more people are now consulting holistic practitioners more often than family doctors.



exude an energy or life force, but if we become cut off from our source of life we too will manifest disease. The holistic practitioner recognises that we function as an integrated whole and that our capacity to relate to ourselves, to others, to life itself has physical effects and that our very cells behave differently when we are happy and fulfilled or depressed and despairing. It recognises the patient's capacity for self-healing and self-repair which can be activated under the right conditions. It is equally as concerned with prevention as with cure, and it views health not just as the absence of disease but as "something right with the entire organism". The whole emphasis is on helping the individual to create the optimum conditions for health, not on disease. Holistic medicine is not in competition with

conventional medicine, and it recognises that drugs and surgery have their place in any system that is truly holistic. But these days people want to spend more time with their practitioner and to be treated as individuals. Above all, they want to take matters into their own hands and to be seen as the solution, not the problem.

Holistic medicine has grown up, along with its patients, and it seems set to become the way forward into the 21st century.

Professional Associations

In a landmark publication (June 1993) the British Medical Association accepted that complementary medicine has much to offer. Its report recommended that every complementary therapy should have a definite

standard of training and that practitioners should be regulated in professional associations. This role has been filled in Ireland by the Irish Health Culture Association and the Irish Association of Holistic Medicine, organisations that together have spearheaded the development of holistic medicine in Ireland, the provision of first-class training, and the regulation of practitioners to the highest standards.

These associations are run by a council of elected members which has introduced:

- Ethics to which all members adhere
- An inspection scheme
- where the premises of members in practice are assessed regularly to ensure a high level of professional presentation to the public.
- An obligatory insurance scheme so that the

interest of the public is totally protected.

The associations also provide, at no extra cost, a programme of continuing education whereby members can update their skills and expand their understanding. With over 300 full members (all qualified therapists) and a large number of student members, the Irish Health Culture Association (IHCA) is Ireland's largest Holistic Therapy Association. For the past two years the association has offered the full-time Diploma in Holistic Health Studies taught through the City of Dublin VEC at Pearse College, Crumlin. This popular innovative course is another "first" for the Association as the first third level course in the holistic field at a state funded institution.

September 1993 saw the launch of the latest IHCA "In Practice" register, listing

approximately 200 members in active practice, all inspected, insured, adhering to a Code of Ethics and with a standard fees structure. This publication is available from public libraries or direct from us (postage & package £1.00) and enables anybody interested in holistic treatment to locate their local therapist and to be sure that the treatment they receive is of the highest standard.

Because of the slowness of official bodies in Ireland to recognise the potential of holistic medicine, the IHCA has developed important links with organisations abroad. The IHCA is affiliated to ABM, a major therapy body in the United States and has cultivated a network of contacts among holistic doctors and naturopaths in the U.S.A. and Britain. The association is justly proud of its link-up with the City and Guilds of London Institute which accords international recognition to the graduates of the combined course.

A Professional Career Path

From the beginning, the association has believed in providing not just one course, but a definite career structure through which practitioners can expand their skills. We have encouraged those who qualify in the three first-year courses advertised opposite to continue with our three-year programme - Diploma in Holistic Preventive Medicine and/or the Diploma in Holistic Nutrition. The Diploma in Psychotherapy in particular has proved invaluable in enabling practitioners to relate to their clients at a deeper level; and many KI Massage therapists have added the Diplomas in Aromatherapy and Clinical Massage to their repertoire. The typical association member today is liable to have three years of formal training in holistic medicine, all achieved while earning their living from the qualifications obtained in their first year.

The Essence of Holistic Medicine

Holistic medicine maintains that the truly holistic person who has become whole or complete in themselves has a transforming effect on all who come in contact with them. In the practice of holistic medicine the quality of the practitioner is seen as a vital factor in the process of healing and life-improvement.

This fact was recognised by modern psychotherapist Carl Jung and indeed by Hippocrates (the father of medicine) over 2000 years ago.

In therapy various approaches can be used - diet, relaxation, massage, and even, where necessary, drugs and operations - to balance the

body and allow the healing process to take place.

But the holistic practitioner who has become whole or complete through self understanding has the greater ability to help than any form of therapy. On the basis that clean air, diet, exercise, a herb or vitamin have a revitalising influence, a truly holistic person has the most positive influence in restoring a person to good health. This is what makes holistic medicine unique.

The cornerstone of all our courses is the philosophy module based on the Educio principles of Tony Quinn



Dr. Tony Quinn
Doctor of Clinical Hypnotherapy

Who Can Train for a Career in Holistic Medicine?

All IHCA courses are open to anyone interested in a satisfying and financially rewarding career, and graduates include men and women of all ages and from all walks of life.

As the courses are part-time, you can train while continuing to hold down a full-time job. The "weekend option" has allowed people to train with us and open

holistic centres or teach classes in their area. All over the country, the demand has been high for the services of our graduates. Internationally, too, our graduates have been successful, with many working in the U.S.A., Australia, Britain, Germany and Saudi Arabia etc. While a Leaving Certificate standard education is

desirable in view of the more technical aspects of the courses, selection of candidates is by interview and is based on aptitude and interest rather than solely on academic attainment. We are looking for people who are interested in the holistic philosophy and approach to living as outlined in this newspaper. If you think you have what it takes to be involved in this very satisfying type of work, phone us at: (01) 830 4686 or (01) 830 4474 for a prospectus.

On receipt of your completed enrolment form, we will arrange an interview. Interviews take place, by appointment, during September.