

# HOLISTIC MEDICINE -PAST AND FUTURE

**DO YOU think its true that if you suffer from hay fever, sniffing plastic flowers can bring on a full blown attack, complete with streaming eyes? That depression can often be lifted by taking up running or other exercise?**

That single people and widows have a higher rate of cancer? That men who recovered from heart attacks and were put on "medication" consisting of harmless sugar pills survived twice as well as those who did not take the "useless" placebo? That people with spiritual beliefs live longer, use less drugs and recover faster from operations than those who don't? That older people who meditated regularly have a lower biological age than their non-meditating peers? That of 100 people who had a virus directly placed inside the mucous lining of the nose only 12 developed symptoms?

**By MARGARET FORDE**

All of the above findings have been reported in scientific journals over the last twenty years. Indeed, there has been an explosion of research - all of which points in the direction of the mind/body/spirit integration that lies at the heart of holistic medicine. Small wonder then that holistic medicine has soared in popularity over the last twenty years and seem set to become the medicine of the twenty first century. Far from being seen as an alternative to orthodox medicine, the influence of the holistic approach has invaded conventional medicine. Some of the most influential books have been written by doctors such as Herbert Benson, Bernie Siegel, Larry Dossey, Andrew Weil, and Dean Ornish, keen to convince their colleagues and the general public by the scientific evidence and results they quote.

My own interest in holistic medicine was sparked over twenty years ago when I went along to Tony Quinn for healing for my eyesight. I had worn glasses since I was ten months old. Six weeks later I had thrown away the glasses and haven't worn them since. I had trained in psychology but nothing I had studied in psychology at that time had given me a clue that such extraordinary improvement in a physical complaint could be produced by doing relaxation with a healer! I immediately set about learning anything I could about yoga, meditation, mind control, massage, aromatherapy, healing, holistic psychotherapy and even running a gym.

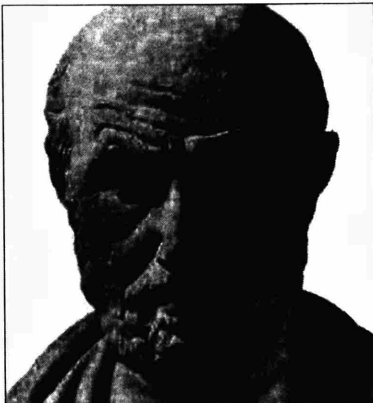
Together with Tony Quinn and my husband Martin (a naturopath and osteopath) we formed the Irish association of holistic medicine and the Irish Health Culture Association, which spearheaded the development of holistic medicine in Ireland. The courses we run have trained thousands of practitioners in Yoga, Ki Massage, holistic Dietetics, holistic psychotherapy, creating employment over a third of a million in the last ten years and promoting the spread of holistic medicine centres all over Ireland.

Why has the growth of holistic medicine been so rapid? Why has it been embraced so enthusiastically by the general public? In truth, holistic medicine is not all that new. All of the ancient systems of medicine from that of the Greeks to the Indian Ayurveda viewed illness as disturbance in the flow of life or "forces" in the person who has the disease, now often called the "host". Even Pasteur, whose work led to the germ theory of disease and interest in the "magic bullet" approach which so dominated medicine in the last century, questioned the value of his own work, wondering if he would not have been better to focus on ways of making the host more resilient. Sir William Osler, a noted physician who lived at the beginning of the twentieth century is often quoted for his advice to doctors: "it is much more important to know what sort of patient has the disease than what sort of disease the patient has." This ethos of strengthening and balancing the "host" of connecting a person back to their life source seems to appeal to people as modern life has become more fragmented and the traditional cohesiveness of close-knit families and communities has disappeared.

## SEARCH FOR EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The fields of both medicine and psychology in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century were to a large extent dominated by a focus on what was wrong, on illness, on pathology rather than experiencing super health. Freud for example based his theory on what he observed in the neurotic patients he worked with. In a world where man walked on the moon, where messages can be sent across the world instantaneously via satellite, where cheaper international travel opened up new horizons for the average person, our interest seems to have switched more in the direction of exploring possibilities rather than simply fixing things. The latter half of the twentieth century has seen a search for expansion of conscious experience, for peak experiences, for self-expression and fulfilment. This in contrast led to a huge

## Holistic medicine has soared in popularity over the last twenty years



● "Disease is a natural phenomenon governed by natural laws and if the disease is not in too serious a condition, Nature will assert herself, and if properly allowed, health will be regained." - Hippocrates

explosion in many holistic areas e.g. meditation, yoga, healing, the newer psychotherapies, which seems set to continue and expand in the new millennium.

In medicine, as in other areas of life, the old hierarchical structures are giving way. No longer are authoritarian relationships the norm. Holistic medicine with its emphasis on partnership, on active involvement of the patient, fits in perfectly with this more democratic trend. Indeed, the word patient with its connotations of passivity is often not used in holistic medicine, largely being replaced by client.

## THE FLOW

Above all, what people seem to appreciate about the holistic approach is the person-to-person contact. A holistic practitioner, e.g. a ki massage therapist is trained to absolutely focus on their client. When the therapist totally focuses in this way they enter into what psychologists now call the flow. The more the therapists enter this state of flow, the more their clients experience a great surge of energy and well being, accompanying a total freeing of the body. Contact with someone who is in this flow draws the client into the same flow. It is this person-to-person contact that is so sought after in holistic medicine. Time and time again we hear people say 'I just feel brilliant after that massage. Everything seems easier to me'.

Again, going back to the start of the last millennium, the ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body pervaded Greek and Roman culture. The Greeks and Romans believed that the two were intimately con-

nected. For example statues of Apollo and Venus (the ideals of male and physical beauty respectively) were placed around pregnant women in order that this constant visualisation of physical perfection might influence the development of the child in the womb. All over Greece men and women trained for the races and competitions at the stadium on Mount Olympus. The gymnasium was a popular venue all over the Roman Empire, with equal importance placed on massage and hydrotherapy, which took place at the baths. It doesn't sound in some ways all that different from the start of this millennium with leisure centres containing gyms and swimming pools proliferating all over the country. There are some differences of course - our gyms tend to cater for both sexes, whereas at the Olympic competitions men and women were forbidden under pain of death to watch each other's races. The ban might have been something to do with the fact that they ran naked!

In this first month of the new millennium most of our therapists report that they are busier than ever. People have literally voted with their feet. They are prepared to pay for the type of medicine they want. I predict that in this new millennium holistic medicine will go from strength to strength. As the research and ideas become more widespread they will infiltrate more and more into conventional medicine. The training of doctors, without losing sight of the huge advances in diagnosis, drugs and surgery will more and more incorporate training in holistic ideas and practices, so that we can have the best of both worlds.



● MARGARET FORDE: BA DipAppPsych HDipEd Holistic Psychotherapist & Registered Psychologist

## Do You Suffer From Body or Foot Odour?

**If so we may have the solution for you.**



## Medically Tested Solution

Unlike normal deodorants which only mask or camouflage odours for a few hours this new medically tested cream can eliminate body or foot problems for up to 15 days - with just one application

And there are many more unique advantages to this remarkable product. For example it does not inhibit the normal function of the sweat glands. No need to re-apply after showering or bathing. Heavy work including exercising doesn't seem to prevent it from working. Tests prove one application can last 15 days, though we have found in many cases much longer.

### Lasts Over 4 Months

One jar can last 4 to 8 months. This new long-life deodorant would certainly seem to make all others obsolete. Called *Larim* it is made from herbal extracts and is simple and quick to apply. Available in two strengths, one for the body and a more potent form to treat feet.

Body Deodorant Price £7.30 • Foot Deodorant Price £9.95