

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 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?

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.

MEDICINE OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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. 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 Siegal, 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.

THOUSANDS OF PRACTITIONERS

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, and holistic psychotherapy, creating employment (even in the lean pre-Celtic-tiger years) and promoting the spread of holistic medicine centres all over Ireland.

ENTHUSIASTICALLY IMMERSED

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

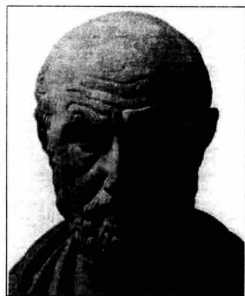
often called the "host". Even Pasteur, whose work led to the germ theory of disease, questioned the value of his own work, wondering if he would not have been better to focus on ways of making the host more resilient. This ethos of strengthening and balancing the "host", of connecting a person back to their life source seems to appeal to people more as modern life has become more fragmented and the traditional cohesiveness of close-knit families and communities has loosened.

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.

PEAK EXPERIENCES

In a world where man walked on the moon, where communications and travel have 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 consciousness, for "peak experiences", for self-expression and fulfillment. This of course led to a huge 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. Above all, what people seem to appreciate about the holistic approach is



"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

By MARGARET FORDE

Holistic medicine has soared in popularity over the last twenty years

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'.

A HEALTHY MIND

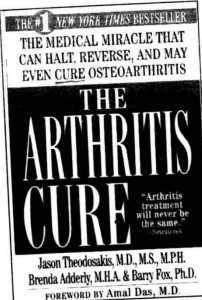
The ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body pervaded Greek and Roman culture. The Greeks and Romans believed that the two were intimately connected. For example statues of Apollo and Venus (the ideals of male and physical beauty respectively) were placed around pregnant women in order that this constant visualisation of physical perfection might influence the development of the child in the womb. 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.



● MARGARET FORDE: BA DipAppPsych HDipEd is a Holistic Psychotherapist & Registered Psychologist in practice in Dublin. She is also a yoga teacher, a qualified gym instructor, and a City and Guilds assessor for Ki Massage Therapy.

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 practises, so that we can have the best of both worlds.

HEALTHY READING



THE ARTHRITIS CURE

"After two months on this remedy..... I have stopped limping, I am playing tennis and ice skating with less pain and my knees have stopped swelling".
- Jane Brody's "Personal Health" column in The New York Times.

Read the No. 1 New York Times Bestseller that's already changing the lives of Millions of Arthritis sufferers!

It's true - after years of suffering from degenerative arthritis, millions of Americans have finally begun to find relief. And you can, too! No longer do you have to endure the unpleasant side effects of painkillers or steroids. The surprisingly simple, inexpensive, and powerful answer lies in The Arthritis Cure.

THERE'S NO REASON TO SUFFER ANYMORE!

Learn how to use a nine-point program that includes a combination of two over-the-counter nutritional supplements - glucosamine sulfate, to help the body rebuild cartilage, and chondroitin sulfate, to protect joints from "cartilage-chewing" enzymes - to halt, reverse, and possibly even cure degenerative osteoarthritis. Backed up by years of research and long used by arthritis sufferers around the world, this revolutionary method is safe, easy, and proven effective. Stop suffering and start living today!

Includes critical information on dosages and brands, plus a powerful nine-point programme to combat arthritis pain.

— COST £9.99 —