

The Crisis in

Allopathic medicine

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All of you know this crisis well, as most of us these days, deal with iatrogenic diseases, diseases that have not been cured by allopathy. In this country, the tendency is to run first to allopathy then chase the alternative therapy practitioners. The pity is that in our schools including medical schools of all descriptions we are not taught the history of medicine. This writer specialises in history of medicine and modern medicine trends. Without knowing history of medicine we do not understand medicine at all. We hope the Homeopathic medical colleges in this country will include the history of medicine in their curriculum. If you visit the United States you find their allopathic medical system is

in disarray. Though conventional medicine excels in the management of medical emergencies, certain bacterial infections, trauma care, and many, complex surgical procedures, it seems to have failed miserably in the areas of disease prevention and the management of the myriad new and chronic illnesses presently filling hospitals and physicians' clinics. Health care costs continue to spiral, simple tests like blood and urine costs, each US\$200/- The state of affairs prevailing there is summed up by the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians. "We wait for illness to develop and then spend huge sums on heroic measures even then ignoring the underlying lifestyle-related causes.

This is the equivalent of waiting for a leaky roof to destroy the infrastructure of a house and then repairing the damage without fixing the leak. This is naturally expensive and ineffective. Perhaps the greatest evidence of the depth of crisis is that we have come to accept such levels of chronic disease as normal, despite evidence that much of it is preventable".

Former surgeon general C Everett Koop, in his 1988 report on Nutrition and health, points out that 'dietary imbalances' are the leading preventable contribution to premature death in US and recommends the expansion of nutrition and lifestyle-modification education for all health care profession-

als. This is borne out by the centers of Disease control, which state that 54 percent of heart disease, 37 percent of cancer, 50 percent of cerebrovascular disease and 49 percent of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) is preventable through life style modification.

In that country people now are experiencing diminishing returns, so one in three flock to alternative therapy practitioners. Same trend is also noticed in this country, but statistics are not available. All over the world, doctors are confronted daily with patients suffering from illnesses for which allopathy/medicine offers only superficial treatment of symptoms. Is there a complete cure for Asthma and host of other diseases ? The magic of antibiotics is vanishing as a host of resistant infections emerge, diseases such as AIDS, cancer, respiratory disease, chronic fatigue syndrome etc. have shown us clearly that the present treatments of allopathy are simply not effective at all and have their limitations.

Growing number of people suffer from host of complaints difficult to define. Adults and children suffer from complaints that include allergies, headaches, lack of energy, excessive fatigue, various digestive and respiratory disorders, along with a variety of emotional states ranging from mild depression to mood swings and anxiety. They manifest what Dr. Bland calls a state of "vertical ill health". "They are not sick enough to lie down (in which case

they would become "horizontally ill") and yet consider themselves "normal" because most of the people they know are equally unhealthy". These people derive only limited benefit from the flood of tranquilizers, antidepressants, analgesics, and antiinflammatory drugs they are commonly prescribed, with side effects that add to their woes.

Thoughtful physicians are becoming increasingly aware that something is wrong with their patient's immune systems, since they continue to suffer from illnesses which normal immune function should be able to deal with. Contemporary medical treatments based on allopathy seem unable to do anything about the decline of immune deficiency. Energy medicine like homoeopathy, herbs, acupuncture can help this malady. Doctors and patients alike perplexed by the failure of drug-based therapies, to bring relief.

All of us know well from experience almost all prescribed allopathy drug treatments merely mask the symptoms or control health problems, or in some way alter the way organs or systems such as circulatory system work, this is the opinion of Dr. John R Lee M.D. of California. "Drugs almost never deal with the reasons why these problems exist, while they frequently create new health problems as side effects of their activity" as observed by Dr. Joanne Caloon.

Well educated and analyti-

cal people realise that their headaches are not due to aspirin deficiency or their hypertension is not being properly addressed by prescriptions of drugs that merely induce diuresis (excessive urine excretion). They are seeking answers that addressed the root cause of their health problems and aid in restoring normal healthy body function. This is not to say that treatment of the symptoms of a condition is wrong what would be wrong would be to think that by eliminating the symptom we have dealt with the problem itself.

Dr. D C Jarvis in his book "Vermont Folk Medicine" asserted as an MD, that the medical education of allopaths is based on inflections and germ theory. After the discovery of disease causing microbes, a philosophy of health occurred due to rival theories, concerning the cause of the disease. One theory was that infecting microbes called germs (viruses, bacteria and fungi) were the cause of illness. The opposing theory maintained that these microbes only became infectious if conditions inside the body were right for them. According to this theory, by keeping the internal environment of the body healthy these potential agents of infection, will remain dormant. When the germ theory of disease became dominant the birth of contemporary medicine, with its emphasis on infectious causes of disease rather than the physiological balance of harmony occurred. This was followed by the rapid development of microscopy,

bacterial cultures, vaccines, X-ray, and in the 1930's the discovery of antibacterial drugs such as penicillin and sulfa drugs. However, the more the medical science embraced the germ theory of disease, the more it also superseded the individual's role in their own health.

The purpose of allopathy medicine was war but not repair. Disease is considered an invasion by an enemy and treatment is aimed at developing "magic bullets" in the form of drugs and vaccines to eliminate that enemy. We have seen the failed war on cancer. A proliferation of antibiotics, and a growing number of surgical procedures, cell-killing radiation treatments, and chemical medications (such as chemotherapy) all of which do harm to the body, in one form or another, in their attempts to restore health.

The emphasis of allopathy medicine remains upon war and not repair, it has led to the organisation of medical schools with their various departments such as endocrinology, nephrology, neurology, dermatology, orthopedics, cardiology etc.

Some years ago a German allopathic student who completed his MD told me sarcastically, "that they deal with parts of the human body, and we deal with the whole body". The various departments of allopathic education forces students to focus their study on one organ system at a time as if each bodily organ functioned independently of all the others or

choose one for exclusive study in preparation for a career in medicine as a "specialist" in that organ system. Dr. Lee notes "We name our diseases by the organ that is being affected, thus we have arthritis, tonsillitis, heart, kidney, appendicitis, colitis, asthma and many others. This diverts attention away from the intrinsic interrelatedness of all parts of our body and the complex dynamism of life forces. It is no wonder that our "modern" doctors understand so little of holistic concepts of health".

In the forceful and convincing introduction ever given on medicine on the "Organon of Medicine", of Hahnemann 6th edition translated by William Boericke. Dr. James Krauss emphatically notes "Hahnemann remains one of the four epochal figures in the history of the practice of medicine. Hippocrates the observer, introduced the art of clinical observation as necessary basis of pathological diagnosis, Galen, the disseminator, spread with powerful authority the teachings of Hippocrates over the medical world. Paracelsus the assailer, introduced chemical as well as physical analysis into the practice of medicine. Hahnemann, the experimenter, discovered the symptomatic sources of both pathologic and therapeutic diagnosis and thereby made the practice of medicine scientific. Allopathic medicine has forgotten that medicine "goes out to teach symptom similarity as the experimental basis of pathologic and therapeutic diagnosis, as the "echte Heiweg" of scientific medi-

cine".

Dr. Leon Chatow "positive health depends upon three factors, which are interconnected. The first of these is the body's structural system, including all of the muscles, bones, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels, and organs, and their functions. The second factor is the body's biochemical processes which involve the absorption and utilisation of nutrients, and the elimination of wastes, along with the complicated biochemical relationships which are the key to cellular function and health. The third factor comprises the mind and emotions, as well as the spiritual dimension of each person. "When there is a balanced energetic interplay between these three components we have health. But when imbalances exist within any of these factors, or in their relationships with each other ill health occurs". Unfortunately this concept is ignored by allopathic medicine. Hippocrates has taught "It is important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has".

Why allopathic doctors think the way they do?

According to John R Lee MD of California, there are a number of reasons for this "The first reason lies in the fact that the selection process of medical students depends in large part on college grades. Students get high grade when they simply repeat in their tests exactly what the teacher wants them to say. Students who question what they are being

taught, on the other hand usually do not get the higher grades, Medical schools therefore are filled with students who are good at adopting given "wisdom" but not necessarily good at thinking and questioning because they have learned to follow percepts handed to them by presumed authorities" The second reason that accounts for the way many doctors think is that medical schools tend to be organised into organ-specific departments. "The idea of an underlying link between these different departmentalised diseases is non-existent within this framework". "Furthermore, the influence of nutrition on the way cells function is ignored or derided by many department heads who defend their own orthodox concepts. "The third reason is one of simple economics" when leaving medical school, the young doctor finds him, or herself in a system that rewards what is called "rescue medicine" or interventions that treat symptoms. Dr. Lee explains there is no reward and there may well be scorn from fellow doctors, for those who take time and trouble to try and prevent illness or attempt to correct nutritional deficiencies which may be causing the patient's conditions. Economic rewards follow only from striking to this particular model of ill-health and treatment".

Malpractice is another great fear among the doctors "People should note that the definition of malpractice is not whether the practice is "good" or "bad" for the patient, but rather if the practice in question is what

other doctors in the given locality normally do or prescribe says Dr. Lee. He adds that doctors also quite naturally, seek the professional and social approval of their peers". Both of these factors conspire to keep the allopath doctors in line, limiting the likelihood of a doctor adopting some unconventional practice technique". According to Dr. Chaitow, the help should come from the treatment that is most appropriate for the individual. "This might involve alternative treatments aimed at helping restoring normal nerve and circulatory supply by addressing structural imbalances. One of the advantages of alternative medicine is that it affords the individual the broadest range of health treatment options. Of course preventive care is always a better choice than waiting to restore health once it has been lost.

Our bodies are not designed to become ill, they are designed to heal and become healthy. "Even if allopathic medicine tells you that your condition is incurable or that your only option is to live a life of dependent on drugs with troublesome side effects, there is hope for improving or reversing your conditions" when, for any of a variety of reasons, our homeostatic potential is limited, or when we are more vulnerable and susceptible because of a decline in immune system efficiency, it is time to seek treatment to encourage the recovery process. The treatment chosen should ideally seek to eliminate causes, remove the obstacles to recovery, or encourage normal ho-

meostasis.

As all alternative healing methods focus on one or more of these key elements. Dr. Chaitow explains why there are so many different forms of treatment in the field of alternative medicine. The treatments themselves do not "cure" the condition, they simply restore the body's self-healing ability. Some treatments focus on biochemistry, others address structural imbalances, while some deal with a person's energetic or emotional requirements. Whatever treatment approach works effectively to build up the homeostasis function efficiently. Individually is important in treating a person. Late Dr. Roger Williams of the University of Texas showed that any group of fifteen to twenty people there can be a range of nutritional requirements from person to person that varies by as much as 700 percent. This illustrates that there is no uniform prescription as to what any of us require nutritionally. Our bodies know what we need, however, and as long as they remain healthy and we supply them with the benefits of a healthy diet, in their own innate wisdom they will automatically take what they need from the food we eat.

In terms of nutritional requirements each person is unique, it follows what is required to return to health also can vary from individual to individual. The focus in alternative therapies to meet the specific needs of each of their patients, rather than to superimpose any particular model or ap-

proach to health as the answer for every person who suffers from it. This type of understanding is lacking in allopathic medicine, for example the allopath who has twelve patients with asthma will often provide each of them with the same recommendations and prescription drugs, in effect treating the condition and not the patients themselves.

An alternative practitioner, on the other hand, will realize that asthma has numerous causes. Some of his patients might be experiencing an allergic reaction to foods or something in their environment, others might have succumbed to a viral infection, while still others might be asthmatic because of diminished nerve supply due to a misaligned spine, such a practitioner will therefore seek to determine the underlying cause for his patient's conditions and treat each of them differently, using the method that will best stimulate their bodies to heal themselves. This distinction between approaches is a corner stone of alter-

native medicine.

Health is far more than the absence of disease. When we are healthy all our bodily systems and functions are harmoniously balanced and integrated with each other and we are also in balance with our environment. In this state of equilibrium our defence mechanisms and our immune system can efficiently handle most of the hazards that life presents, whether these are pathogenic organisms, toxic substances, or stress factors of various kinds.

According to James Martin MD "The return to health therefore is a road which each person must be walking according to his or her on unique individuality. It is also a road that needs to address one's entire being, taking into account one's mental, emotional, and physical aspects as well as the structural, biochemical and energetic components that shape each of us. It is precisely because alternative medicine honors and understands these concepts, that is now

positioned to become a valuable and necessary pathway for meeting the medical crisis we, as a planet, are currently facing. History records the rise and fall of many fashions in medical treatment but herbal medicine and homeopathy has a future as secure as its venerable past" this is the conclusion of Dr. Fletcher Hyde.

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann wrote "the highest ideal of cure is the speedy, gentle and enduring restoration of health by the most trustworthy and least harmful way".

"The primary cause of our disease is in us, always in us" Antoine Beathcamp 1883.

Dr. Albert Schweister the Nobel prize winner believed "It's supposed to be a professional secret, I'll tell you anyway, we doctors do nothing. We only help and encourage the doctor within". He reached this conclusion in the fag end of life, after treating thousands of patients in Africa.

OMISSION REGRETED

The omission of the author is regretted in the "Case reports... for further Investigation" of the last issue (Summer '96) (page 55) written in Hindi. His address is as follows:

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