

Alternative medicine joins the mainstream

Philosophical shift comes as health care system stretches to its limits

BY ELAINE KENNEY

In the book *Why things Bite Back*, Edward Tenner describes the great strides that were made, particularly during the Second World War, when health care was mostly "crisis or -'emergency care." At that time, surgical techniques and the use of antibiotics dramatically cut death rates: "... medical technology has been most dramatically effective when injury has been most severe and has needed the most prompt attention." It seems that since the war, western medicine has continued in this mode, where most maladies are dealt with by medication or surgery.

Today, much evidence suggests there is a philosophical shift towards "health maintenance and preventative health care," and away from crisis care. This shift generates an easy alliance with alternative approaches, which share some basic premises about health, including a strong conviction about the body's innate ability to heal itself.

This philosophical shift comes at a time when the medical system is stretched to the limit, so individuals, partly out of necessity, need to take more and more responsibility for their

own health. Is the trend partly rooted in the baby boomers' quest for longevity and quality of life? No doubt, as this generation has always been preoccupied with living long, healthy lives.

Do you know anyone who isn't taking a vitamin, herbal or health supplement? And most people, I am sure, know the benefits of echinacea to build the immune system and help ward off the flu.

The ancient practice of yoga is experiencing a resurgence throughout Ottawa. Yoga classes are offered at most community and recreational centres. Ottawa yoga instructor, Patricia Dymond, has initiated programs specifically for cancer and heart patients.

Three decades ago it was thought that most people would have the choice of a four-day work week, and we would have Plenty of leisure time on our hands. In fact, the federal government was so convinced of this trend that it conducted a leisure time study in 1972-73. Yet few people today have reduced their work week or take the amount of leisure time that was predicted. We're still working overtime and being asked to take on extra duties. Many families have two income earners and the growing self-employed sector has its own stressors.

Today we begin a series on alternative medicine with a look at homeopathy.

Tomorrow: Environmental health and chiropractic care.



Homeopathy offers deep and true healing

200-year-old approach is fastest growing form of alternative treatment

BY ELAINE KENNEY

Homeopathy, a 200-year-old science, has undergone more growth: in the last 10 years than any other alternative approach in terms of its application and the results it produces. Interestingly, all over Europe, India and South America, many MDs practise homeopathy along with conventional medicine.

"Homeopathy is curative -- it goes to the cause of the disease or condition; conventional medicine is mostly palliative -- it alleviates symptoms," says Dr. Shahram Ayoubzadeh, who practises homeopathy and naturopathy at Ottawa's Integral Health Clinic.

He believes that in many cases of acute and chronic conditions, the body if properly assisted, has the resources to overcome illness. "Homeopathy, as an alternative health practice, is my biggest love, and as a philosophy it makes perfect sense to me."

Dr. Ayoubzadeh, who has been in practice since 1988, applies its fundamental principles when treating patients.

"Treat the cause, not the symptoms. Treat the whole, not the part. The first thing I ask is: 'Why is the patient suffering?' Whether the patient is experiencing a migraine headache, high blood pressure or depression, I look at finding the root cause of the problem."

Dr. Ayoubzadeh has helped thousands of patients improve their health using homeopathy. "My objective is to build a complete profile that includes all aspects of the patient's emotional and physical makeup."

Practitioners use a variety of questions to help patients get to the source of their problems and find the appropriate homeopathic remedy: Is the person hot or cold? Heavy or slender? Perspires a lot? Introverted or an extrovert? Rational or emotional, excited or depressed? What does the patient crave?

According to Dr. Ayoubzadeh, medical doctors are pressured to see too many patients and often have too little time with them to get to the real root of their health condition. A basic principle in homeopathy is that "like cures like" -- if a substance causes a disease



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or a condition, that same substance, in a very minute and diluted dose, can cure a similar disease.

The effects of these diluted remedies are first tested for their effectiveness in treating patients by using healthy individuals in double-blind studies. Close to 500 of these remedies have been very well studied and successfully used and many more are always in the process of being tested. It takes four or five years before a new remedy's effect is properly understood.

What is unique about homeopathic remedies is that they are extremely diluted by a process called "potentisation" That is, they are diluted so much that the original substance is not physically present, but rather its essence or energy is. And that is why there can be no adverse physical effects to the remedy.

In order for a homeopathic treatment to be successful, the remedy has to match perfectly the state of the patient. Otherwise, it won't act at all or it will improve the condition only temporarily.

Once taken, the remedy can initiate a "healing crisis" by intensifying symptoms. Thus, remedies simulate and stimulate the body's natural defense system to finish the healing job it has started, and often afterwards, the symptoms are gone forever.

In acute and infectious disease, in addition to the appropriate homeopathic remedy, Dr. Ayoubzadeh also prescribes a "potentized" form of the actual bacteria or virus -- (like cures like, similar to the vaccination process). If there is no significant improvement within 12-24 hours of the homeopathic treatment, he advises his patients to seek appropriate conventional therapy.

Homeopaths believe that all people have inherent weaknesses and predispositions to specific disorders -- it is the predisposition that needs to be cured in a patient. These dormant predispositions are triggered by physical, environmental or emotional traumas and result in symptoms and pathologies.

Healing at the emotional level is particularly significant in homeopathy -- often a deep form of healing takes place at this level which in turn heals the physical ailment.

Parvaneh Rowshan, a local employment counsellor, has experienced profound healing with Dr. Ayoubzadeh, consults with him periodically to address any of her health concerns.

"I have complete trust in his approach." Initially, she saw him for back pain. "I soon realized that his homeopathic treatments were healing me at a much deeper level -- an emotional level. After taking a remedy, my subconscious would be sparked and I'd often have a dream which would resolve an emotional issue, which resulted in my back pain going away. Homeopathy has made a huge, significant positive change in my life -- I also know myself and my life objectives better"

Because remedies are based on the distinctive profile of the patient, it connects the



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whole person.

"The remedy acts as a catalyst to promote healing in every part of the person's life:" says Dr. Ayoubzadeh.

"By ridding the body of inherent weaknesses, the patient's general quality of life improves and the process sparked by the remedy significantly diminishes the possibility of the person developing chronic disease."

