

The patients that arrive at my clinic with a single, clearly identifiable symptom or condition are very rare - nearly all of them present multiple symptoms.

Over several years of practice, I have moved from a single therapy approach to the much more multi-faceted, truly 'holistic' technique which I now use, combining treatments from several different disciplines and applying each where most appropriate. I have found that this has resulted in significant improvement in the successful treatment of most conditions.

The underlying basis for all of my treatment programmes is Naturopathic and Herbal. This includes: looking at diet and nutrition - ensuring the body is suffused with nutrients; improving digestion including removing allergies and food sensitivities; thorough detoxification of all the body organs and systems through the use of herbs and other natural remedies. I also use Homeopathy, Energy therapies and Thought Field Therapy, as well as general support work to help a patient to clarify purpose and life goals. Whilst a patient's treatment programme might include all of the above, specific remedies are selected according to each individual's symptoms, condition and constitution.

Natural Health Diagnosis

Of course, treatment can be targeted more appropriately with a diagnosis, so to get a picture of the patient's state of health I use a combination of kinesiology, bio-energy and iridology in my analysis. Whilst this must not be misconstrued as a medical diagnosis, it is an important part of gathering information of the condition of the body organs and systems. From this information I can tailor the treatment programme to each individual.

Iridology

Iridology literally means the study of the iris. It was developed by the Hungarian physician Ignatz Von Peckzely (1826 -1911) as a diagnostic tool whereby an assessment of a

person's state of health can be made simply through observation of the iris. It does not name specific diseases but provides an in-depth analysis of the body's various systems and their conditions, revealing the root cause of any ailments the patient may be suffering. Genetic make up, constitutional strengths and weaknesses and congestive and irritative conditions can also be shown. Various markings, structure and colourings within the iris show detailed pathological and functional disturbances, and whether these are sub-acute, acute, chronic or degenerative. Functional and organic changes can be revealed long before they manifest as symptoms. When the correct treatment is applied these markings change in colour and shape, sometimes disappearing altogether. A bright, clean and clear iris radiates health and happiness.

To read the signs in the iris of the eye, the iris must be illuminated and magnified using a quality pocket medical torch and good optical magnifier. Any markings are recorded on an iris chart or photographed.

It is always fascinating to see patients' reactions once this part is completed, as I am able to give them a picture of what's going on in their body before they have even told me. I can provide them with information on the type of constitution they have and their strengths and weakness. The eyes are truly the windows of the soul.

Once the analysis is complete I am then able to put together a treatment programme selecting the appropriate remedies, focusing on the areas that need particular attention and addressing those first. It would be useful at this point to provide the background and philosophy of Naturopathy to help understand how and why I select the appropriate treatment.

Naturopathy

Naturopathy follows the principal of providing the body with the right tools to allow an individual's own inner healing to take place.

This involves use of natural therapies to build up, improve, and create harmony within the body. It draws on the healing wisdom of India (Ayurveda), China (Taoism) and Greece (Hippocrates).

Naturopathy is based on living according to the laws of nature and that a violation of these laws is the causes of disease. It follows common sense reasoning to find a solution to the problems of health, disease and cure.

Cause of Disease

In Naturopathy it is believed that the causes of disease are:

- (i) Transgression or violation of laws of nature.
- (ii) Circumstances beyond our control (e.g. accident, poisons, bites, vaccination, inhalation, war, etc).
- (iii) Hereditary
- (iv) Pernicious fashions of the time can lead one to eat, drink, sleep and dress against the laws of nature.
- (v) Insufficient or too great amount of exercise.
- (vi) Sudden changes from hot to cold or vice versa.
- (vii) Mechanical or chemical injuries: wounds, cuts, burns and freezes.

Naturopathic Principles

Much of the philosophy of Naturopathic Medicine is based on time-tested principles where Naturopaths seek to:

Do no harm – employ therapies that are safe and effective.

Apply the use of nature's healing powers – the body itself heals; the physician facilitates and enhances this process

Treat the cause – Naturopaths will seek to treat the cause of disease rather than suppress the symptoms.

Treat the whole person – the individual is composed of a physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social make up.

Teach the Patient – empowering the patient and helping them to understand health is part of the Naturopath's role.

Prevention is the best – understanding health allows individuals to support their health throughout life.

Promote wellness – the Naturopath will aim to achieve optimum health.

Violation of the laws on the body result in a) lowered vitality b) abnormal composition of blood and lymph and c) accumulation of toxins. Toxins are substances that do not sit well in the body and can include: drugs, toxicity generated in the bowel, lead from petrol, smoking, cleaning and chemical agents, chemicals used within the garden and in foods such as pesticides, herbicides and man made hormones.

Acute disease is the result of nature's efforts to eliminate toxins and repair living tissue, a healing effort by the body to correct itself.

Chronic disease is where there is such lowered vitality due to accumulation of toxins and destruction of vital organs, which has progressed to such an extent that the nature's corrective force is no longer able to react against the condition by acute corrective measures.

Naturopathic Therapies

As has been previously mentioned a Naturopath will also look at the individual's diet, lifestyle, exercise, thinking and emotional health. Therapies selected for natural healing to occur include: nutritional therapy, herbal medicine, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, fasting and detoxification programmes, massage and manipulation therapies and counselling. As mentioned it is often the case that patients I see who come with complex symptoms require a number of these treatments.

Nutritional Therapy

The principle that food is medicine is fundamental in Naturopathy and is core to the treatment. Food and farming has radically changed over the last 200 years with production of fewer types of food grains and increasing use of pesticides and herbicides. Chemical spraying is believed to reduce the vitality of the soil in which plants obtain their source of nutrients, thus reducing the rich vitamin and mineral content of the plant. This is further reduced by various food processing and packaging methods. It is therefore unlikely

that individuals will gain enough nutrients simply through a balanced diet.

I often get patients to increase their consumption of raw or lightly cooked vegetables and fruit, nuts and seeds, beans and pulses and a variety of whole grains. I recommend that animal protein be kept to a minimum and red meats be avoided altogether. Individuals are also requested to reduce and/or eliminate stimulants such as tea, coffee, alcohol, sugar and soft fizzy drinks. Food sensitivities need to be checked for, reduced or eliminated as appropriate or they will just continue to exacerbate any symptoms.

A Naturopath will prescribe vitamin and mineral supplements where needed for the individual.

Herbal Medicine

Herbs have been used as medicines for centuries. Naturopaths are trained herbalists and use the appropriate herbal remedy to encourage healing.

Herbal preparations can be in tincture form, capsules, tablets or powders; they can also be used freely in cooking. They are best used in their whole form, so that all the compounds within the herb work together. The quality of the herbs is essential in treatment and practitioners will carefully select organic or wild crafted herbs or preparations that have been made with due care and attention.

Herbs are generally safe to take but a practitioner will need to check that there are no contra-indications or side effects with any medications that are being taken.

Homeopathy (see article on homeopathy)

Homeopathy was founded by Samuel Hahnemann in 1796 and works on the principle of 'like cures like'. Each remedy is selected according to the individual's symptoms, constitution, modalities and the remedy reflecting a similar profile to the disease.

A homeopathic remedy is formulated from a plant, animal, mineral or chemical substance. A

substance is taken and diluted several times, until a very minute quantity of the substance is present. This is known as potentizing. Naturopaths will often prescribe homeopathic remedies as part of patient's treatment programme.

Detoxification

Detoxification is an integral part of the treatment and all my patients partake in a thorough detoxification programme. It is something that we all need to be doing on a regular basis to clear up accumulated toxins that build up in the body.

Detoxification not only involves adjusting the diet but also cleansing the vital organs and systems of the body: colon, liver, kidney, blood and lymph. The colon is particularly prone to build up through poor diet and the effects of stress and tension. Cleansing the organs can be easily and effectively carried out through the use of diet, herbs and supplements.

Fasting Programmes

A Naturopath will suggest fasting where there is urgency or a need to speed up assistance to the body. Fasting helps divert the body's resources, to be utilised elsewhere other than digestion. This can be in cases of chronic and/or acute disease, during healing crises where the body is struggling to clear itself or where there is reduced vitality.

Our bodies naturally fast, for instance, when we are ill or don't feel like eating. Fasting programmes can vary in length from 3, 7, 10 or 28 days. Fasts can be done for a day, once a week as a preventative measure. It is important to go into a fast carefully, for example, giving up anything like tea and coffee gently several days leading up to the fast to avoid strong detoxification symptoms. Breaking a fast needs to be done with care, with the slow introduction firstly of fruits and vegetables. Types of fasts include: raw fruits, vegetable juices, mixed fruit and vegetables and water.

Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy has long had its use in cultural traditions as a form of healing and I recommend its use to all my patients. It is based on the principles of utilising the body's temperature regulation mechanism with the application of water. This can be in any form (hot water, cold water, ice, steam, etc) applied through various methods (shower, pool, douche, sitz bath, spa, jacuzzi, sauna, bath, pack, foot bath, wrap, colon irrigation). Alternating between hot and cold stimulates the blood circulation that encourages quicker flow of nutrients and removal of waste from body organs; vessels taking blood to the organs are constricted when cooled and dilated when warmed, encouraging blood to the surface of the skin. This invigorates and stimulates the whole body, encouraging detoxification and increased circulation and assimilation of nutrients and oxygen.

Physical Therapies (see Osteopathy article)
Often there are times where musculo-skeletal problems require specific attention. Physical therapies are particularly useful where there is a lot of tension and stress around the individual. Massage is great for this, clearing away the knots of tensions held in muscles and joints.

For misalignments, structural adjustments or manipulations I recommend the use of Osteopathy or Chiropractic. Kinesiology also uses gentle physical manipulation to the spine and muscles.

Lifestyle & Emotional Health

The cause of the problem does not always arise from within the individual. Sometimes it is necessary to look on the outside, to the environment and lifestyle. If the cause of the symptoms arises from the environment then these issues have to be addressed, and the individual has to look within – making internal changes, i.e. adapting or addressing the cause directly and gently in a way that is appropriate.

For deep emotional issues I will make use of techniques such as visualisation, affirmations,

Thought Field Therapy¹ and also focus on life purpose and direction which often comes up within the treatment as individuals begin to gain clarity within their health and wellbeing.

Evaluation

An interesting phenomenon I have found with patients is that having arrived with a list of many symptoms, they often forgot what they had originally come for as they got better! I therefore set up a simple evaluation system so that the treatment could be monitored and assessed objectively over its duration. Using this system, I can now measure the progress of improvement in all my patients' symptoms.

Conclusions – The Integrated Approach

I think that the most powerful insight into the benefits of a truly holistic integrated approach has been shown through the patients who come to me having reached 'the end of the line'. Many have been through the NHS, from GP to counsellors to specialist consultants and have then tried different, sometimes many, complementary therapies *but are still suffering from the same symptoms*.

Throughout their quest for health, the one thing that seems to have been missed is the holistic view - standing back and viewing the whole of their health, constitution, lifestyle and symptoms as one collective whole. For instance, the fact that a congested bowel can have a profound impact upon mental health could not be properly understood without this holistic overview. Of course, there will always be areas of specialism but these need to be brought together to be truly effective

This synergistic effect can be profound when creating a truly holistic treatment programme combined with rigorous evaluation of progress. I have found that this integrated system of healthcare to be most effective in my practice and have experienced even the most hopeless cases respond when all aspects of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs are addressed.

¹ Further information about this therapy can be gained from www.thoughtfieldtherapy.co.uk

Rumana Zahn practices at Elmfield Health Group in Newcastle, in Darlington, and at Seaham Hall Serenity Spa.

Tel: 01325 722803

Email: info@rumanahealth.com

Web: www.rumanahealth.com

Rumana Zahn is a member of: Institute of Complementary Medicine, British Register of Complementary Practitioners, Association of Master Herbalists, Kinesiology Federation, European Institute of Plexus Bio-Energy.