

To Your Health!

By Judy Hargis, P.A., and Audeen Wagner



Holistic Medicine

We hear a lot these days about holistic medicine (or "alternative" or "integrative" or "complementary" medicine). This is the start of a series of articles on the subject, which we hope will be of use to our readers.

First of all, What Is It??! Holistic medicine defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well being – hence, the word holistic. It refers to the idea that a 'thing' (in this case, the human body) is greater than its

parts...something like "2 + 2 is not 4 but more than 4." The concepts of health and fitness involve more than just taking care of the various parts of the body; attention is paid to emotional and spiritual health as well. The goal is "a wellness that encompasses the entire person, rather than just the lack of physical pain or disease."

The practice of holistic medicine includes a number of complementary and alternative methods of treatment, including naturopathic medicine, natural products, Eastern practices (such as acupuncture and other traditional Oriental methods), and much more. The idea of "holism" has been around for a long time, but in more recent years, the conventional medical community has begun to recognize it and integrate its ideas into the health care system. In the U.S., the first National Conference on Holistic Health was held in 1975.

Holistic medicine is a rapidly growing field. In 1990, Americans made an estimated 425 million visits to alternative health practitioners. Patients are finding it helpful to use alternative methods of treating and preventing disease. Here are some of the alternative therapies that have been studied with grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in recent years:

- Acupuncture. Used to treat depression, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, osteoarthritis, and post-operative dental pain.
- Hypnosis. For chronic low back pain and to accelerate fracture healing.
- Ayurvedic herbals. Used for Parkinson's disease. (Ayurvedic medicine is a holistic system based on the belief that herbals, massage, and other stress relievers help the body make its own natural drugs.)
- Biofeedback. For diabetes and low back pain. (Biofeedback is the conscious control of body functions such as the heart and blood vessels.)
- Imagery. Studied for use with asthma and breast cancer patients. (With im-

agery, patients are guided to see themselves in different physical, emotional and spiritual environments.)

Do these methods sound a little hard to believe or understand? The good news is, they work for many patients, who are having successful results with these ideas, which seem "different." The whole medical community is recognizing the use of complementary treatments to enhance procedures. (The above list of studies, of course, does not encompass all the possible uses of those therapies – you've probably heard of using hypnosis for stopping smoking or losing weight, for instance. The problems listed are only the ones recently studied by the NIH.)

It is good to know that there are many ways to treat and prevent illnesses, and that world-wide traditional methods in health and prevention therapies are being integrated into modern practices.

"Alternative" and "complementary" medicine doesn't mean that patients should not see their "regular" doctor, by any means. A doctor's role in combating disease by using remedies such as drugs or surgery, is a comforting reality when you are sick. The idea of integrating other treatment methods into conventional practices seems to be a growing trend.

Here is a true story to illustrate the difference between conventional and holistic practices, and a perfect example of how they can, and do, work together for the betterment of the patient:

A patient with a cancerous growth in her neck that had spread to the base of her tongue was told by her oncologist that radiating her mouth and throat offered the best chance of cure. Unfortunately, X-ray therapy often burns the delicate tissues of the mouth, making eating and swallowing painful and difficult. There would be swelling and soreness and she might lose some teeth! The patient consulted a specialist in Alternative Medicine, and she was advised to have the radiation, but to gargle with sesame oil before and after each session. The cancer specialists were somewhat amused by this, but did not object – it could do no harm, and they had nothing better to offer. To their astonishment the patient did not suffer any of the devastating symptoms, and even her sense of taste remained almost completely normal! Her oncologist's chart notes indicated that her mouth was "remarkably well hydrated with excellent saliva production. She clearly was extraordinarily positive throughout the course of the treatment, which was obviously to her great benefit." Dr. Rosenfeld, who tells the story, felt strongly that the sesame oil "did the trick" and that it is an excellent example of how patients can benefit when conventional and alternative practitioners work together to provide them with the "best of both worlds."

The holistic view of treating the physical, mental and social well-being certainly should be considered a welcome addition to medical practice.

October has been named Domestic Violence Awareness month

October is being introduced as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, by the Columbia County Women's Resource Center. This is an opportunity for our community to participate in activities to raise awareness and understanding regarding the issue of domestic violence. Domestic violence is

defined as a pattern of behaviors that one individual uses to gain power and control of another individual. There are currently six types of recognized abuse: Physical, Emotional/Verbal, Sexual, Social, Spiritual, and Financial.

Nearly 5.3 million incidents of domestic violence occur each year among U.S. women ages 18 and older, 3.2 million occur among men, and between 3.3. and 10 million children are exposed to domestic violence in the United States.

Nationally, the cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year. Intimate partner violence costs Oregonians nearly \$55 million every year, with more than two-thirds of those dollars spent on health care services.

Domestic Violence is an issue that affects all communities despite socioeconomic status, race, religion, age, class, or education level.

Columbia County Women's Resource Center and Columbia County Domestic Violence

Council would like to invite community members to join us in recognizing October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month by participating in

awareness events and educational opportunities. There is currently a Domestic Violence Awareness Month billboard, **Please see page 14**

Diabetes Burnout topic of free talk

Diabetes Burnout is the name of a free, no registration required, discussion on Saturday, October 27, from 9:00 a.m. to noon, at Tuality Health Education Center, 334 SE 8th Ave., Hillsboro.

Do you find dealing with your diabetes frustrating? Do you get tired of having to pay attention to carbohydrates and

blood-sugar monitoring? Do you sometimes feel that you just want to quit?

Michael Fulop, Psy.D., is a diabetes specialist and will show how not to let diabetes limit the choices in your life.

Enjoy food, refreshments and an opportunity to learn how to work through the challenges of diabetes.

Free breast health information

Empowerment through Knowledge: Breast Health for Every Woman will be the subject of an informative discussion by Dr. Deborah Nixdorf, N.D., L.Ac., at Banks Curves,

163 N. Main, Ste. B on Wednesday, October 24 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call 503-324-9262 to register for this free class. Refreshments will be served.

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