

Healing Arts Report

Examining Alternatives in Health and Healing

Volume 1, No. 3

Dear Reader:

It's a real challenge for us to make decisions when we read so many authoritative and contradictory opinions about a single health topic. No wonder we often just give up and hand the decision over to our doctor.

It would be great if a consumers' review on alternative care existed, trying out and assessing different therapies. One factor that would make this kind of assessment so difficult is that each person is unique and complex. If one person is willing to change diet and another believes only in the power of the mind, they

are not going to be amenable to the same types of intervention, even if we could be sure that their physical needs were the same. What *Healing Arts Report* can do is tell you about some of the alternatives -- the professional services and resources available, so that you can explore those that are appropriate for you. In the following article I discuss a small booklet on a topic we see references to everywhere.

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HEALING ARTS

Why Are People Taking DHEA Hormone?

We see it on the grocery store shelves. We see it in the health food stores and touted in all the magazines. Amidst all this promotional material, I came upon a booklet that at least put the fragmented information in a context and answered a number of obvious questions. Why should anyone be using DHEA? Are there any contra-indications? Are there ways to increase DHEA without supplements?

The booklet is called *DHEA: The Youth and Health Hormone* by C. Norman Shealy, M.D., Ph.D. Shealy is a recognized pioneer for his work in the treatment of pain and stress-related illness. He is an avid researcher, so there are plenty of research references in this booklet as well as descriptions of his own clinical experience.

Dr. Shealy is the innovator of the TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) device commonly used to treat sports injuries, and he is known widely for his pharmaceutically restrained approaches in treating a number of illnesses, including depression.

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What's All The Fuss About DHEA?

Two interesting factors make this hormone very important.

- DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is the most abundant hormone in all mammals and it is an essential component in many bodily functions, including mood.
- It may be the most critical chemical in predicting disease or health.

It is predictably deficient in every major disease including atherosclerosis, autoimmune disorders, cancer, coronary artery disease, depression, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, lupus, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, obesity, rheumatoid arthritis, and stroke.

Dr. Shealy also linked DHEA decline during the aging process to an increase in cholesterol levels. Since DHEA is made from cholesterol, he speculates that there may be a failure in some enzymatic process. Like progesterone, DHEA is also a precursor of testosterone and estrogen, lack of which causes many andropausal and menopausal symptoms.

All Disease Is the Result of Stress

Shealy describes illness as being a combination of the person's genetic predisposition plus psychological/emotional influences on certain parts of the body. As examples, one person's failed love relationship may result in a breakdown of the physical organ of the heart while the same disappointment in love for someone with a weak immune system may result in cancer.

Stress decreases DHEA levels. In this booklet, Shealy describes physical, chemical, emotional, and electromagnetic stressors in detail. These include such things as inactivity, caffeine, fear, inadequate sleep, and television. Chronic stress becomes harder and harder to recover from. Each new stress lowers the ability of the body to respond until depletion and the development of major illness occurs.

Included in the booklet is a list of symptoms. Dr. Shealy suggests using this checklist because ordinary blood profiles do not test for DHEA. If you have 20 or more of these symptoms at the same time, or have had them during the last six months, it is likely that

you have a DHEA deficiency.

The booklet also includes the Social Readjustment Scale, designed by Drs. Holmes and Rahe 40 years ago. It measures the best known cause of stress -- social change. If you score 75 points or more on this test and have many symptoms, you probably have a low DHEA level.

What Are Stressors?

Most stressors are easily recognized, but some are a surprise. Any change is stressful, even ones you want, such as a new job, eating sugar, retirement, having a new family member, moving to a new home, taking a vacation, and changes in any habits. Dr. Shealy also points out that not being in natural light for an hour a day and lacking a sense of meaning in life also contribute to stress and exhaustion.

DHEA interacts with a variety of neurochemicals and, in so doing, affects insulin, immune function, and brain degeneration. DHEA also has metabolic effects such as stabilizing weight, decreasing cholesterol, stabilizing glucose, and enhancing immune function.

Can It Be Measured?

There is a simple blood test to measure DHEA levels but he warns that he sent three identical blood samples to each of five labs with vastly different results. Each was labeled as if it had been taken from a different patient, and the results varied by 50 to 100 percent. Only one lab had an acceptable variation of five percent. Shealy has stated publicly that he does not have a financial investment in the only lab he recommends, the Corning Nichols Institute (1-800-553-5445).

How to Replace DHEA

Dr. Shealy suggests finding a doctor who is willing to work with patients in assessing their DHEA level. If the DHEA level is less than 180 ng/dL in a woman or 220 ng/dL in a man and if the patients have a serious illness, they should be placed on oral DHEA in dosages that bring blood levels up to at least 400-450 ng/dL in a woman or 600-650 ng/dL in a man. Optimal levels are 550-980 ng/dL for women and 750-1250 ng/dL for men. Checking these levels requires additional blood tests.

At the same time, Shealy suggests a DHEA restoration program that allows patients to withdraw from oral supplementation. Dr. Shealy points out that DHEA is increased by:

- physical exercise
- stress reduction programs
- transcendental meditation
- reduced intake of calories

In his clinic, he most often uses the following methods to restore DHEA without supplements -- use of the Liss cranial electrical stimulator or the GigaTENS applied to twelve specific acupuncture points illustrated in the booklet and three percent natural progesterone cream. At the Shealy Institute, using the Liss cranial electrical stimulator on the acupuncture points thirty minutes a day resulted in a 63 percent average increase of DHEA levels. By combining progesterone, gigaTENS, and the Liss stimulator, the average increases are over 93 percent. (Shealy hopes to have an excellent electrical stimulator available for over-the-counter sales soon.)

Another research and education organization, the Institute of HeartMath, also has a program to offer. Their research shows that people could raise their own levels of DHEA by practicing the techniques described in their book or abridged audio cassette called *Cut-Thru* and by listening to the music tape called *Speed of Balance*. The Institute's research is focused on the role of the heart in health and perception.

Cut-Thru is information to help in cutting through old patterns of unproductive feelings and reactions, including the physical and emotional drain of worry, anxiety, and guilt. It is recommended by Christiane Northrup, M.D., author of *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, because it describes "in a clear and scientific way (of) the crucial link between heart-felt emotions and our physical health -- and then explains precisely how to apply this information in our own lives."

Contra-Indications of Supplementation

Dr. Shealy does not recommend DHEA supplementation or progesterone cream for persons with hormonally-influenced cancers such as breast, ovary, uterus, or prostate. Electrical stimulation of the acupuncture

points and stress management programs, however, can be used safely with those individuals.

Live One Hundred Years

Dr. Shealy believes that we should all be able to live 100 years. These are some of the actions to take that will make it possible:

- a healthy diet without nicotine
- regular exercise
- time outside every day
- daily relaxation or meditation
- avoiding excessive airplane and auto travel
- resolving anger, guilt, anxiety, or depression

To find out more about Dr. Shealy's treatment programs, contact the Shealy Institute for Comprehensive Health Care, 1328 E. Evergreen, Springfield, MO 65803. Phone 417-865-5940 or fax 417-865-6111.

DHEA: The Youth and Health Hormone *can be purchased from Keats Publishing, Inc. of New Canaan, CT for \$3.95. Phone 203-966-8721 or fax 203-972-3991.*

HEALTH CARE TRENDS

Looking at Cultural Health

One of the largest issues affecting everyone's health is the cultural factor, which includes how the culture supports the development of friendships, the way in which we rest, attitudes promoted in a workplace, and a sense of meaning in life. Two women who are known for their work in these areas are anthropologist Angeles Arrien, Ph.D. and corporate consultant Meg Wheatley.

The First Lie By Which We Live

Angeles Arrien, Ph.D., describes the most destructive lie we commonly learn -- that we don't make a difference. She suggests that if we don't believe we make a difference, imagine one broken down car in rush hour traffic, or remember Rosa Parks, a small woman sitting on a bus who quietly said, "No, I don't believe I will move."

According to Arrien, we bring sickness

to the earth by not expressing our gifts and talents. Personal development is an area not usually addressed by conventional medicine. In holistic medicine, a person's vital essence, or 'soul', is seen as the foundation of health. The assumptions of a culture are reflected in the way we are educated by it. These assumptions appear to be changing. Arrien's unique dual cultural upbringing in America and the Spanish Pyrenees has helped her gain insight into wisdom beyond cultural trappings.

It's Never Too Late

She exhorts us to remember and work toward a life dream, an activity in our lives that gives us a sense of meaning. She suggests daily reminders to:

- set your life dream, or what she calls our 'sacred intention', through prayer
- express gratitude, which keeps the heart open
- take a life-affirming action each day -- one action toward expressing your life dream

Dr. Arrien recommends books with inspiring stories -- Canfield and Hansen's *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, for example. Inspiring stories remind us of the resiliency of the human spirit, ready to heal even after tragic personal loss or practiced alienation.

Health As Balance

To Arrien, optimum health in the individual is a balance of leading, healing, visioning, and teaching. These are qualities that are available to people living in any culture. She sees this structure as a way of supporting health individually and within our families, workplaces, and communities.

Leadership begins with choosing to be present. It is expressed through appropriate action, clear communication, and right timing. Healing means paying attention to meaning. It is expressed through love, gratitude, acknowledgment, and validation. It includes attending to personal health and the health of the environment. We practice Vision by being truthful without blame. Acting on vision requires authenticity, creativity, and ability to bring our visions into the world. Teaching is expressed

through constructive communication and information sharing.

Trusting Life's Sense of Organization

Margaret J. Wheatley, Ph.D., finds it unfortunate that, as a culture, we leave behind the sense of meaning we know inside ourselves when we move into organizations and institutions. She believes that we could improve corporate life and, therefore, the lives of those working in corporations by observing that, in life, organization is a naturally occurring phenomenon. We don't have to impose our sense of organization on it.

From the development of cells to the human psyche to community and to the cosmos, life tends to organize and experiment creatively with what is possible. Life, even seen through the lens of science, is creative, diverse, intent on differentness, and more and more complex. She contrasts this with a typical organizational chart consisting of rows of little boxes. It is a great disservice to ourselves to model human activity on mechanistic images. She adds, "Life seeks order but it uses messes to get there."

Challenging the Myth of Competition

Dr. Wheatley challenges the myth of competition. She described two birds on the Galapagos Islands. They are very similar but one has a longer narrower beak, the other a shorter thicker beak. During times of drought, the bird with the longer beak is able to tap into the moisture of a cactus without injuring itself. One might expect that it should survive and the other should perish. But life is not like that. Life cooperates. Once the long-beaked bird opens the cactus, the bird with the short beak is then also able to get the exposed food. Diversity allows both of them to survive.

The image of a very hostile world where there is only one right answer is not accurate. In science, there is a sense that life tinkers, looks at the moment, and plays to find what works. It does not have a commitment to planned incremental change, for example.

Dr. Wheatley suggests we promote participation rather than competition. As examples, she cited a West Virginia chemical company that invited its workers to write their own

mission statement. They wrote, "We will make West Virginia, the United States, and the world a safer place because of how we do our work." Workers at a dog food company began their mission statement with "Because pets contribute to human health. . . ." People want their lives to be meaningful in relation to the bigger whole. Given that freedom, they will create the meaning.

The New Science

This interconnection between elements is reflected in new insights in science. Aspen trees which propagate by sending out runners were once thought of as many trees but may actually be only one. Scientists have observed that when one part of a forest is suffering, bacteria send food to it from the part of the forest which is not sick. In general, life does not accept bosses, only partners.

In human affairs, the clearer an organization is about its purpose, the more it can organize itself in such a way as to allow for multiple creativity instead of authoritarian hierarchy. "When a mean-spirited company leader becomes enlightened, workers come back willing to work and love," Dr. Wheatley explained. If you want to know more about these ideas, Dr. Wheatley suggests reading *The Origins of Order* and *At Home in the Universe* by Stuart Kaufman and *Out of Control* by Kevin Kelley.

Angeles Arrien, Ph.D. is an anthropologist and educator who focuses on bringing ancient wisdom into contemporary life. Books she has authored include The Four Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer, and Visionary and Signs of Life: The Five Universal Shapes and How to Use Them. For retreat information, phone 415-331-5050 or fax 415-331-5069.

Margaret J. Wheatley, Ph.D., is president of the Berkana Institute and a principal of Kellner-Rogers & Wheatley Inc. She uses the self-organizational principles of natural science to help institutions and organizations achieve coherence. For business consultation, contact Kellner-Rogers & Wheatley, Inc. at 801-377-2996.

Both women have spoken at Common Boundary. For information about Common Boundary's magazine and annual conference, phone 301-652-9495 or fax 301-652-0579. ♪

SCIENCE REPORT

Isolation Increases Health Risk

Dr. Dean Ornish discussed some research emphasizing an ingredient of illness that has been attracting more attention recently. In research on 2,300 men with heart attacks, those who felt most isolated had four times the risk of death from any cause. He explained that isolation leads to stress and stress leads to chronic disease.

From Finland, another study showed that the most isolated people had three times the risk of death from any cause. David Spiegel, in research published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that lonely people had a much higher incidence of cancer. In another experiment lasting for a year, Spiegel had a support group with cancer patients and a control group of cancer patients who did not participate in a support group. When he followed up on them for other reasons five years later, he was surprised to find that those in the support group had survived twice as long as the control group.

Rising Above Separation

In his book, *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease*, Dr. Ornish describes in detail three techniques to help us become more connected to others. We can only summarize them briefly here.

1. Through improving communication skills, we can learn how to talk with each other in a way that allows others to hear us better. We have little training in recognizing the difference between expressing judgments and feelings, or in experiencing the different effects these two forms of expression have on others. He recommends the book *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion* by Carol Tavris.

2. The second technique, compassion, is a listening skill. It means trying to experience and understand what the other person is feeling. It may include acknowledging what the person is saying. It is not feeling sorry for them or giving them unsolicited advice.

3. The third technique is group support. You can create a support group or join an existing one. Either way, there is great benefit in

having an experienced therapist to facilitate the group, demonstrate communication skills, and share information in a compassionate manner about the group's topic of concern.

One place to look for a group is the American Self-Help Clearinghouse. They list over 700 national and one-of-a-kind self-help groups that can help you help yourself. Their *Self-Help Sourcebook* sells for \$9.00. If there is no group for the subject in which you're interested, the Clearinghouse will send you a free two-page flyer "Ideas for Starting a Self-Help Group." Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Patients Are Asking To Be Treated Differently

Dr. Ornish notes that one important reason people are willing to pay out-of-pocket for alternative help is because of the improved way they are treated. Conventional health professionals need to work at a deeper level, from a place of compassion. For healing to happen, treatment must include the patient's participation, their being listened to, and feeling nurtured. Group support can be a great asset.

Healing Lessons From Paradise

The 2,000-year-old Oceanic culture supports this inclusiveness. Their medical model differs from both continental Eastern and Western approaches. According to Paul Ka'ikena Pearsall, Ph.D., the indigenous Polynesian approach provides a "connective and enchanted view of the world" which is, in fact, the same foundation called for in the new medicines which are his specialty -- psychoneuroimmunology and ecopsychology.

The Oceanic model contains many elements which are a natural corrective to the problem of isolation commonly seen in the West. Involvement rather than professional distance, merging with the patient rather than manipulating him or her, healing relationships rather than individuals, seeing the collective 'soul' outside and among others rather than as an individual internal 'soul', concern for how and with whom one eats rather than what one eats illustrate a few of the differences.

Healing is based on loving respect for everyone and everything. Dr. Pearsall explains that all of the most contemporary health and

healing concepts are contained in the word aloha, which mean "to share the sacred breath given us by the Creator." In his psychoneuroimmunological research, the five components of aloha have been found to be crucial to well-being. They diminish vulnerability to disease:

- patience with non-urgent perseverance
- intimate and stable social connections
- absence of anger and cynicism
- selflessness and volunteerism
- loving kindness and relaxed affiliation

Such concepts are beginning to be appreciated as scientifically valid.

Dean Ornish, M.D. and the Preventive Medicine Research Institute are at 1001 Bridgeway, Box 305, Sausalito, CA 94965, 415-332-2525.

Contact the American Self-Help Clearinghouse at 201-625-9565 or 201-625-7101. Web address is <http://www.cmhc.com/selfhelp/>

Paul Ka'ikena Pearsall, Ph.D., is the author of A Healing Intimacy: The Power of Loving Connections. He is founder and president of Ho'ala Hou, a research and consulting organization dedicated to the perpetuation and application of the lessons of Polynesian health, healing, and living. His stateside address is P.O. Box 250709, Franklin, MI 48025-0709. Phone 313-336-3603 or fax 313-336-6255.

ADVOCACY

Your Doctor Could Lose His License By Helping You

Many states still allow local medical boards to prevent a doctor from practicing safe, less expensive, and truly preventive methods simply because they aren't in common or conventional use. In a concept paper written by Sen. Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Rep. Peter Defazio (D-OR), they pointed out that the current medical system limits patients' choices to conventional modalities, even when their illnesses are unresponsive to them. The system also discourages the development of new treatments.

Effort to Protect the Public

Alternative therapies often use natural substances which have a long history of safe usage. The stringent and costly requirements of proof expected by the FDA were designed to protect the public from unsafe pharmaceuticals and are often inappropriate for natural products or therapeutic bodywork techniques which are ineligible for patents. Right now, citizens of many other countries have legal access to treatments which we do not.

Former congressman Berkley Bedell (D-IA) is one of the catalysts for improved legislation. When costly conventional methods failed to cure him of Lyme disease, he sought out a treatment which was nothing more than processed whey of cow's milk. His symptoms disappeared after taking regular doses of it for two months. Bedell also credits the use of complementary medicines for his recovery from prostate cancer. At this time, practitioners who use such treatments risk losing their licenses for helping patients solve their health problems.

The Access To Medical Treatment Act

The Access to Medical Treatment Act, H.R. 2019/S. 1035, allows consumers to choose alternative medical treatments. It also allows certified health practitioners to use unconventional therapies, for which they've been trained, without fear of harassment, censure, or recrimination. Several aspects of this bill are designed to protect consumers:

- only those qualified to administer medical treatments are authorized to use a treatment within the scope of their practice
- all advertising and labeling claims are prohibited by those who might make personal financial gain
- no marketing of any treatment is allowed

The practitioner must see the patient and assess whether this treatment poses any unreasonable or significant danger to the person. Health care providers would be obligated to inform consumers in writing that the therapy is not yet FDA approved, what the contents and methods of the treatment are, the anticipated benefits, any foreseeable side effects, results of past use of the treatment, and any other infor-

mation necessary for informed consent. The consumer can then make his own decision. The practitioner is also mandated to report dangers as well as benefits of the treatment.

The bill was simultaneously re-introduced in the House and the Senate in early February. According to Berkley Bedell, the use of less invasive and preventive approaches could also save the federal government billions of dollars in Medicare costs alone.

View Alternatives Differently

Many countries view what we call 'alternatives' as traditional and essential to their health care systems. They focus on health maintenance and prevention rather than on disease and trauma. With the increase in chronic illness, alternative treatments are often more helpful than conventional methods. Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, and a variety of shamanistic or indigenous medicines are used by more of the world's population than conventional Western practices.

Tell Your Legislators

Bedell asks us to contact our senators and representatives and voice our opinions about the Access to Medical Treatment Act and alternative therapies. Let your senators and representative know how you feel. The quickest way to find their names is to call your local library. Then phone 202-224-3121, the Congressional switchboard, which can connect you to any U.S. legislator's office.

The American Preventive Medical Association has some good information about the Access to Medical Treatment Act. Their address is 459 Walker Road, Great Falls, VA 22066. Phone 1-800-230-

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2762 or fax 703-759-6711. Also, Senator Daschle's

office will send you a copy of the bill. Phone toll-free at 1-800-424-9094.

Q & A

Q. What is the latest news from the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM)? Also, what are they actually mandated to do?

A. In November 1996, the OAM's application to become a Collaborating Center in Traditional Medicine was accepted by the World Health Organization. OAM is now part of a network of 19 institutions worldwide. Traditional medicine refers to the way health was protected and treated for all the generations before the advent of modern medicine. According to Nancy Hazelton, the principal OAM coordinator with WHO, the Office's "foremost challenge is to ensure that information on traditional medicine and treatments is collected in an acceptable format for U.S. scientists and health practitioners."

OAM's Biggest Challenge

Because the OAM has no direct funding for research, investigators must apply to the institutes that comprise the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (NIH) for funding. Many of the reviewers are unfamiliar with alternative medicine so an attempt is being made to find alternative specialists to participate on the research review committees.

OAM's Mandate

In their own words, "The Office of Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health, was created by congressional mandate in 1992. Its mission is to support research to investigate the effectiveness of alternative therapies and provide public information about alternative practices." Sen. Tom Harkin and Rep. Berkeley Bedell were responsible for helping establish the Office of Alternative Medicine.

The Office does not provide information on alternative practices, finding practitioners, or giving treatments. OAM encourages people to seek out licensed practitioners. Each state has authority over the licensing of alternative practitioners. Professional associations of alternative medical practitioners can provide information on practices, training, qualifications of practitioners, and types of health problems treated. OAM's book reporting on the status of alternative medicine in the U.S., *Alternative Medicine: Expanding Medical Horizons*, includes information on practices, research methodology, the peer review process, research and training needs, and information dissemination activities. It costs \$25.


For general, research, cancer, or HIV/AIDS information packets or to order their book, call the OAM at 301-402-2466. Two professional associations that can make referrals to practitioners are the American Holistic Medical Association at 919-787-5146 and the American Holistic Nurses Association at 919-787-5181.



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