

# Healing Arts Report

Examining Alternatives in Health and Healing

Volume 2, No. 2

Dear Reader,

From early childhood, I dreaded the onset of winter with its short dark days. The sense was that now life would be conducted in black and white -- a loss of the glorious color of summer. In fact, I assessed the pleasantness of every environment, even places outdoors, by how much natural light there was.

The wish for light became more bothersome as I aged because increasingly more hours were spent indoors. School days were longer and work environments had fewer windows. Time spent outdoors dwindled to almost none. Until reading *Light Years Ahead* (Tiburon, CA: Light Years Ahead Productions, 1996), I didn't understand that the need for light might be more than simple preference.

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## HEALING ARTS

### The Many Hues of Light Therapy

Complementary therapies based on the application of light are being used for healing everything from mood disorders to cancer. As with so many 'new' therapies, light as medicine has a long history. References to healing with light are found in Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures.

Jacob Liberman, O.D., Ph.D., author of *Light: Medicine of the Future* (Bear & Company, Santa Fe, 1991) asks us to consider words that reflect our deep connection with light: profound spiritual insight is described as 'enlightenment.' When we are over-serious, we are asked to 'lighten up.' We describe bad times as the 'dark night of the soul' and the person who brings joy is called the 'light of our lives.'

In addition, we see relief from any problem as 'the light at the end of the tunnel.' Understanding comes when someone 'sheds light' on a topic and then we 'see the light.'

Concealing one's talents is 'hiding one's light under a bushel. A cheery atmosphere is 'light,' while serious, grave subjects are dark.

Light therapies improve health by using full spectrum, bright, strobic, color, and laser light. Research has shown that exposure to sunlight and to specific colors affect mood, breathing rate, pulse rate, blood pressure, and other changes in the autonomic nervous system. Light entering the eye, and even the area around the eye, is converted to electrical impulses which travel along the optic nerve. The nerve carries them to the hypothalamus, a part of the endocrine system, which sends out chemical messengers called neurotransmitters, which in turn regulate the autonomic nervous system.

Humans evolved in a world where full-spectrum light pervades the atmosphere. There is increasing evidence that spending so much time indoors over the last one hundred years is leaving us deficient of this 'nutrient.' Indoor lighting is neither as bright as natural light, nor does it contain the full spectrum.

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Bright light therapy is most often used for improving mood disorders and psychological functioning. Norman E. Rosenthal, M.D., Chief, Section on Environmental Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health, explains that, in this regard, intensity is the most critical variable, not spectrum.<sup>1</sup>

In the early 1980s, Rosenthal and colleagues described the condition known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). It differs from classic depression in its strong seasonality. Their experiments with controlled light treatment were effective in addressing the symptoms of SAD, which include depression, oversleeping, overeating, craving carbohydrates, and gaining weight. Other uses of bright light therapy include reduction of bulimia, improvement of sleep patterns in people who cannot fall asleep until two or three a.m., and regulation of menstrual cycles.

A program begun in 1938 by Dr. Darel Boyd Harmon surveyed health and education problems in over 4,000 classrooms affecting over 160,000 students. Problem areas included visual difficulties, nutrition, chronic infections, postural problems, and chronic fatigue. The experimenters were able to reduce symptoms by 25.6 to 65 percent simply by improving with minimal effort the lighting, seating, and decor for a period of six months. Although nothing had been done to change the teaching methods or curriculum, comparable results were also seen in academic achievement.

### **Full-Spectrum Light**

Liberman suggests that our need for full spectrum may also be important. For years, hospitals have conventionally treated jaundice in newborns with full-spectrum or high luminosity blue light. He points out that when we are indoors, even in rooms with good natural light, glass is usually a barrier to ultraviolet light. More than ever, when we go outdoors, we wear UV barrier sun glasses, sun screen, and try to be exposed as little as possible. According to Liberman, a number of studies indicate that we may suffer from a lack of ultraviolet light.

The man most credited with increasing our understanding of full-spectrum light is John Ott, a banker whose interest in time-lapse photography helped him make some remarkable discoveries about light and its effects on plants,

animals, and humans. As a photographer for Disney Studios, he observed how plants would not fully mature under fluorescent light but did so when ultraviolet light was added.

He also studied laboratory animals. Those living in natural light lived about twice as long and were healthier than those living under fluorescent light. With Ott's inspiration, the Duro-Test Corporation developed the first full-spectrum fluorescent known as Vita-Lite. Ott also conducted testing in classrooms. Behavior and classroom performance, as well as overall academic achievement, improved within a month of installing full-spectrum, radiation-shielded fluorescent light fixtures. Some children with learning disabilities and extreme hyperactivity problems also improved under full-spectrum light.

Full-spectrum light is used in the poultry industry. Chickens were found to live twice as long, lay more eggs, be more calm, less aggressive, and produce eggs 25 percent lower in cholesterol. Apparently, even human cholesterol levels drop when people are exposed to sunlight.<sup>2</sup>

Non-full-spectrum lighting, which is often used in work places, was shown to create hormones ACTH and cortisol in levels considered stressful. This may explain why Ott and others observed an increase in agitated physical behavior, fatigue, reduced mental capabilities, and growth inhibition in children who spent the entire day under artificial illumination.<sup>3</sup>

### **New Techniques Presented**

At a groundbreaking conference in 1995, fifteen presenters shared distinct and varied ways of using light as a healing modality for physical, somatic, and psychological conditions. According to Brian Breiling, Psy.D., co-creator with Dr. Lee Hartley of the Light Years Ahead Conference, light appears to be the interface between mind-body medicine and subtle energy healing.

He suggests that our requirements for full-spectrum light is similar to our nutritional needs. It varies from individual to individual. How much is needed depends on mood, season of the year, constitution, and overall level of health. Breiling points to symptoms of light starvation which "have been associated with a higher incidence of irritability, fatigue, illness, lower immune functioning, insomnia, hypersomnia, depression, alcoholism, and suicide."

In addition, other symptoms include deficiencies in vitamin D, calcium, neurotransmitters, and neurohormones. Lack of vitamin D also effects the utilization of phosphorus. Its effect on calcium levels is related to the development of bones and teeth in children, maintenance of the nervous system, heart functioning, and blood clotting.

Breiling now uses the Lumatron Ocular Light Stimulator, a color phototherapy device, which has two actions: projecting color into the eyes and flashing the light at speeds which can be varied. The combination of light and psychotherapy speeds the process of talk therapy so well that he uses it with 95 percent of his clients. At times, he also combines hypnosis, somatic psychology, eye movement techniques, and breathwork for overwhelmingly positive results. Conditions that have been experimentally treated in this way include anxiety, attention deficit disorder, dissociative disorders, dyslexia, chronic fatigue, food allergies, learning problems, hypertension, migraine, pain, phobias, post traumatic stress disorder, and depression -- both seasonal and nonseasonal.

According to Lumatron developer, John Downey, O.D., Ph.D., light sent through the eyes affects brain function. Light stimulates the cerebral cortex to increase motivation, learning, thinking, creativity, and memory. In the limbic system, perceived light brings emotional impressions of the world, and in the brain stem, light affects coordination and balance.

Yet another photodynamic therapy is being used to treat cancer. It works by injecting photofrin, a light-sensitive substance which accumulates in cancer cells, into the body. When exposed to light by way of fiberoptic tubes, it kills the cancer cells, leaving most normal tissue unharmed. Research on the many forms of light therapy are far from conclusive, but surely are promising.

*The SunBox Company provides information about bright and full spectrum equipment. Phone 800-548-3968.*

*Write Light Years Ahead Publishing at P.O. Box 174, Tiburon, CA 94920.*

*Audiotapes of Jacob Liberman seminars can be ordered at 800-81 light.*

*World travelling teacher, John Downing, O.D., can be contacted at 707-525-4747*

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## CULTURAL HEALTH

### Medical School Educational Research and Development

Few universities offer classes which intentionally cross academic boundaries but the College of Medicine at the University of Kentucky's Office of Integrative Studies has a unique program open to students and the local community. It was founded by Joseph Engelberg, Ph.D., thirty years ago, and has evolved into a program which experiments with innovative integrative approaches to education from high school level, through college, and continuing education. The program gives:

- students an opportunity to synthesize the experiences they have inside and outside of school
- professors an opportunity to develop integrative approaches to teaching, service, and research
- scholars an opportunity to exercise integrative thought
- the university a vehicle for bringing together diverse ideas and the people who understand them

#### Why In Medical School?

According to Engelberg, "Medical centers are the integrative heart of modern universities. Health care . . . must deal with all the dimensions of human existence." This program developed in a medical school because all aspects of life are "intertwined and continually operative" in this environment. The designing and building of the hospital; the gathering of physicians, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, other health professionals, and support staff; the troubled, pregnant, sick, and dying, and their families who come for aid 365 days a year 24 hours a day; the science of diagnosis and treatment; and the economic, social, political, legal, forensic, technological, and religious dimensions are all there, explains Engelberg.

Motivation for the program comes from the disciplinary isolation that faculty and students experience when they are restricted to their specialty. Integrative study provides a way to synthesize information into a more compre-

hensive intellectual structure which includes all areas of an individual's knowledge and experience.

Currently, in science, there is a crossing of disciplinary boundaries in physics, biology, engineering, and other sciences. Words and phrases are being invented to describe these combinations, such as 'psychoneuroimmunology' and 'ecopsychology.' Even engineering is exploring the anomalies in which only human conscious intention, not physical manipulation, affects the operation of electronic or mechanical devices.

Engelberg points out that etymologically 'healing' is related to holy, holiness, hale, wholesome, and whole. Healing is also conceptually related to religion and spirituality. The word 'integration' is simply the academic equivalent term. Integrative study places its focus on wholes -- cells, multicellular organisms, families, communities, institutions, and societies -- not parts. Discussions are based on case histories (legal, political, and economic, as well as medical), literature, or collections of observations. Communication takes place in the most powerful integrative language of all -- the language of everyday life. It developed from the purposes of integration. It is what holds family, society, and friendships together.

Engelberg doesn't think establishing a school of integrative studies would be wise. "It would work against integration. The professors in such a school would be kept busy writing publications and grant applications. Courses would have to be invented to justify the program. For the purpose of broadening the students, they would be required to take a variety of other specialized courses. It would work against reaching out and bringing together conceptual, human, and institutional elements from one's environment. What I am doing now would lose its flexibility. We operate without restrictions and with a small budget and staff. We organize events and programs without having to obtain permission from any administrative source or to satisfy a contractual obligation. When something needs to be or can be done, we can usually do it immediately."

### **The Need for Integration**

Over the last four hundred years in science, there has been a continual fragmenting of fields of thought into ever narrower, though

deeper, areas of specialization. A tremendous amount of information and expertise grew from this way of studying what Engelberg calls 'the Realm of Parts.' Practitioners are specialists of all kinds -- pathologists, plumbers, cooks, and physicists. The problem, Engelberg points out, is when these experts are then asked to solve broad problems from 'the Realm of Wholes.' This realm is concerned with the creation and maintenance of families, institutions, communities, and societies. Individuals who play integrative roles populate the Realm of Wholes. They are homemakers, administrators, entrepreneurs, statesmen, and other generalists.

When experts are asked to solve 'macro' problems they may believe their solutions are correct but seldom acted upon. They attribute this to public or legislative indifference. "This is naive," says Engelberg, "because how to get the public and legislators to implement a solution is precisely a part of the solution. A 'solution' which does not address this aspect is not a solution.

"What this points up is that at the level of the individual, the family, an institution, a community, or a nation, there are problems which cannot be delegated to representatives of areas of specialization." Increasingly our culture is experiencing disillusion with science and medicine and recognizing the need for understanding how the numerous parts of all kinds of living systems are forged together to form living wholes.

### **Integrative Activities**

The Office of Integrative Studies has sponsored a wide range of special programs which have included, at various times over the years, weekly roundtable discussions in a community setting; clinical conferences centered on and including specific patients, their families, and associated health professionals; and medical ethics/legal grand rounds about such issues as removal of ventilator support for a dying patient, assisted reproduction, and organ donation. Invitations are sent to local and regional faculty, students, staff, and ordinary citizens. In addition, the Office also organizes two college courses open to medical, premedical, and basic science students.

Colloquia have also brought medical staff and faculty together in settings away from the campus for day-long discussions on such

topics as “The Integrative Power of Nursing,” “Natural Dying,” and “Professional Integration Around Patient Care.” The Nurse Preceptor Program, an outgrowth of one of these conferences, assigns medical students, interns, and residents to a nurse preceptor. They assist the nurse during an eight-hour shift, where possible, and observe hospital organization and patient care from the nursing perspective.

Medicine Review Projects examines complex medical case histories drawn from the University Hospital. An example is the progression of AIDS in a patient with hemophilia. The investigations include interviews with the patient, health professionals, and the patient’s family. It seeks to present the patient history in the context of the patient’s whole life.

The weekly “Integrative Studies Seminars” series, which has run for over twenty years, involves no lecture. Each week a catalyst text is read aloud, a few sentences or paragraphs at a time, and discussed. Primary texts are drawn from literature, history, religion, philosophy, and more. Proust, St. Bernard, case histories, Sophocles, and Tolstoy jostle one another. The ‘panelists’ in these seminars are mostly professors from a variety of fields. The seminars are non-credit and open to students and the general public.

Participants in these events find that all of their life experiences are relevant and respected. Integrative study is a communal process as well as an individual one. The object is to connect. The focus is on what is true about a given statement. To make such encounters productive, Engelberg explains, participants turn away from the methods of their areas of specialization (such as lectures) and its language, which are inimical to integrative thought, and adopt a discipline unique to integrative study -- “face towards the universe instead of their specialization and open a dialogue.”

*Aids on integrative study, including sets of framework statements which can serve as catalysts for discussion, can be found in Engelberg’s The Nature of Integrative Study, New Forums Press, P.O. Box 876, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076.*

*For more information on programs, contact the Office of Integrative Studies, A.B. Chandler Medical Center, College of Medicine, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 606-257-9000.*

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## COMMENTARY

# Healing Ourselves

Miranda Castro, F.S.Hom., homeopath and author, tells the story of her son who, when he was about three years old, put his finger on the bottom of a saucepan that had just come off the stove.<sup>4</sup> His finger pad turned white and hard with the fingerprint flattened. He cried from the pain. She quickly put his hand under cold running water and ran off to get her remedies. When she came back, however, he was standing in the middle of the room with his hand behind his back and the water turned off.

Castro, who is also coordinator of the Post-graduate Homeopathic Medicine Program at Bastyr University, asked her son what he was doing. He answered in a defiant tone of voice, “I want to heal myself!” He then ran past her, up the stairs to his bedroom, and slammed the door. This was unusual behavior for him. He was normally a very compliant child whom she treated easily with homeopathic remedies when he was sick or injured.

She was shocked at his behavior and wanted to protest -- being the healer was her role! She had to laugh at herself for thinking like this. However, being British, she soon soothed her own protests with what she describes as an undervalued traditional solution for difficult situations -- she sat down and had a nice cuppa tea.

Her son came out of his room twenty minutes later to show her how he was healing himself. He described three healing “rituals.” He blew on his finger in a particular way, or he spoke special words, or he touched the pad of the burnt finger to another finger or an object. If it hurt a lot, he did all three at once. His finger healed in a day or two without any blisters or scars.

### Respecting the Patient’s Healing Process

From this beautiful lesson, Castro says she learned to ask her patients, whatever their age, whether they need her help or whether they can heal themselves. In fact, she teaches parents to ask their children the same question. A patient will think about it, sometimes for the first time, and choose to wait and see how their body handles it.

Castro suggests that telling patients what is wrong with them, especially using medical jargon, instills the idea of being ill and keeps the patient dependent on expert help. Instead, she says, "I see myself more as a farmer who sows seeds that are watered and tended by the patient. I have called these 'self-healing seeds,' and I hope they will take root and flourish wherever they are able to."

She explains that she is not expecting patients to heal themselves all the time, only when it is possible and appropriate. By nurturing a cooperative relationship, patients feel invited to take an active role in their health. She encourages this by asking a patient what they think or feel they need from her. If they are knowledgeable about homeopathy, she is willing to discuss the remedy she has chosen and be flexible around the choice of potency. She also negotiates around appointments. Some people prefer to see her at regular intervals, others only when they need to.

"Patients are their own best experts," Castro states, "knowing more about themselves than I ever will." Castro believes there is a process involved in healing which is different from simply having a rational goal. "We can work together to share our expertise," she says.

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"It is then that I can do my best work." She is thankful to her son for trusting himself enough to challenge her and for reminding her to trust the healing presence that is in us all.

*Castro is author of The Complete Homeopathy Handbook and the recently published Homeopathic Guide to Stress, (New York: St. Martin's Press).*

*For more information about Bastyr University programs, phone 425-823-1300*

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## *HEALING ARTS*

### **Imagery Counters Side-Effects of Toxic Cancer Treatments**

John Shaffer, D.Min. facilitates healing in his clients by depending primarily upon imagery cues that arise from them. His studies with psychologist Carl Rogers in the early 1950s influenced his 'client-centered' focus. Shaffer, past president of the American Association for the Study of Mental Imagery, specializes in working with clients who have cancer. For a complex disease such as cancer, he urges patients to use imagery as one component in a multi-faceted treatment program combining conventional with non-medical methods. Shaffer makes three points about the treatment of cancer: (1) early detection radically increases the probability of a cure; (2) maintain a healthy lifestyle to support the immune system; and (3) the patient's state of mind can influence the success or failure of treatment.

#### **Treatment Preparation Exercise**

Shaffer gives an example of a script that patients can use to prepare themselves for undergoing chemotherapy or radiation. He suggests that patients need not follow his words exactly. They should tailor the script to fit their own situation. First, they could imagine themselves in the center of their brain in a control room with the audio and video turned on and in contact with the whole body. By sitting comfortably and breathing easily and deeply, they will be able to relax more with each breath. In this awake-dreaming state, Shaffer suggests they talk to their body and tell it of their good intentions.

"I am going to have a heavy dose of chemotherapy on (fill in day). It may look like poison to you, and you may question why this is being done. It is my doctor's opinion that this chemotherapy is necessary to destroy a fast growing aggressive cancer throughout parts of my body. I am sending this message knowing that all normal, healthy cells can understand what I am saying and take action.

"I am alerting you now so that you will all cover yourselves with a protective shield provided by the immune system. Do not attack the chemotherapy. Allow it to infiltrate the cancer cells and destroy them in the best interest of the body. Let it pass over the rest of you and the body will eliminate it as fast as possible.

"I will be with you throughout, making sure you remain healthy and normal. All normal necessary functions of the body will continue as usual during this time of cleansing the body of cancer."

Shaffer suggests that the patient add anything that communicates the above message in a way that is right for him- or herself. A general principle to apply in any kind of intrusive healing procedure is to keep the body informed about what is being done and why. Another way to consider the process is that patients are comforting their own body as they would comfort a child who is frightened and who might not understand the purpose of the procedures.

### **Images Are Most Important Predictors**

In Jeanne Achterberg's book, *Imagery In Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine*, she describes a series of studies correlating outcomes with the images people spontaneously chose in visualizing cancer cells, treatments, and their immune system. It was found that these images were the most important predictors of health. Achterberg reminds us that before computers, the statistical analysis of such complex studies would have been almost impossible.

She describes how imagining the cells of the immune system as those who fought for God and country or other images of strength, such as Vikings, were nearly always associated with a positive outcome. Images of animals with killer instincts such as sharks were sometimes, but not always, associated with good responses. When some people tried to force such images

they were disgusted with the gore. Very poor responses were associated with weak symbols such as snowflakes or clouds. Those with the worst prognosis often were unable to describe anything about their immune system, yet described the cancer vividly."

*American Association For the Study of Mental Imagery, coordinator Anees Sheikh, 414-781-2174. John Shaffer can be reached at 217-245 0204.*

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## **RESEARCH**

### **First Center Dedicated To Researching Touch**

The Touch Research Institute is the first center for basic and applied research on the sense of touch. Located at the University of Miami School of Medicine, the institute was formally established in 1992. Under the direction of Tiffany Field, Ph.D, the institute strives to define how touch promotes health and contributes to the treatment of disease.

Although touch has been used for comforting and healing through the ages, technology is often used to replace touch in medical settings. At TRI, research is demonstrating how this vital act can be an important component in enhancing immune function and emotional stability. In recent years, popular stories abound about preterm baby/parent programs which increase bonding through touch, bypassing life-support equipment barriers. In spite of the increasing publicity in the media about such programs, most preterm infants still do not receive this treatment. It isn't protocol. Even among hospital staff who recognize the value of touch, lack of time often does not allow its practice.

Tiffany Field has headed studies showing that premature babies massaged briefly three times a day for ten days gain 47 percent more weight than a control group of infants not receiving it. They leave the hospital six days earlier and save about \$10,000 each in hospital charges -- a possible savings of \$4.35 billion annually in the United States.

The Institute's research show that touch therapy can play an important role in treating many medical conditions. Studies show that massage or touch helps preterm babies gain

weight, affects sleep disorders, contributes to less aggressiveness in children, decreases anxiety in post-traumatic stress disorder, improves dietary compliance and lowers anxiety, depression, and glucose levels in diabetic children, and lowers depression and anxiety in teenage mothers. Touch increases serotonin during massage and increases killer cells in HIV patients;<sup>5</sup> and it decreases pain levels, improves sleep patterns, decreases fatigue, anxiety, depression, and cortisol levels in fibromyalgia patients.<sup>6</sup>

Even healthy people benefit from massage. It alters brain waves in ways that are consistent with enhanced alertness. Workers who received a massage at lunch time, instead of becoming sleepy as might be expected, were able to complete math problems more quickly and with fewer errors, and it also lowered anxiety and job stress levels.<sup>7</sup> Although it is not clear how massage affects the nervous system, it is clear that massage is more than skin deep.

*For information about the Touch Research Institute symposia and newsletter, phone 305-547-6781 or 6790, or fax 305-243-6488. Website is <http://www.miami.edu/touch-research/>.*

Best wishes,



Barbara June Appelgren

## RESOURCES

### Find Health Events Anywhere

For the most complete global calendar of health events, access the Health World Online calendar at <http://www.healthcalendar.com>. It can be searched by keyword, region, and date.


## END NOTES

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