

Energy medicine: Futuristic healing with ancient roots

by Dana Ullman, MPH in The Chiropractic Journal
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Therapeutic touching practices seem as old as records of history. Certain sensitive therapeutic touch practitioners, like many psychics, seem to see energy patterns (or auras) around and through people from which susceptibility to disease can be diagnosed. The gaps in energy patterns, the degrees of density and the colors emitted from the body together provide diagnostic information. Band-aiding gaps in energy patterns, “tonifying” the energy’s overall density, and balancing the field that emanates from them are therapeutic methods used to manipulate forces and fields that stimulate a healing process.

Initially, these beliefs and claims appear metaphysical. But research in biological science and environmental medicine is beginning to explain the influence of field effects, bio-electrical processes, and biological hypersensitivity upon human health.

The use of electrical current to stimulate wound healing and bone regeneration is stirring the medical community with its successes and implications. Researchers find small doses of electrical current that mimic the electrical potential from the wound or bone can stimulate its healing. Others find that imposing an electrical field to a recently amputated limb, say in a frog, can lead to appreciable regeneration where slower regeneration would normally occur. The significance of this research is that it begins to show the special curative value of changing electrical fields within an organism to influence biochemical and physiological function.

Specialists in environmental medicine have looked at how low-dose energy from fluorescent lights, air ions, microwaves, cell phones, sound and electromagnetic fields can distort cell functioning and result in illness. Although most people may not experience any obvious effects from these fields, it can and should be acknowledged that there seem to be some hypersensitive individuals for whom such influences have significant impact. It has long been known that such stressors can cause chronic conditions after long-term exposure. Yet, recent research shows that significant functional abnormalities occur from low doses well before structural changes take place.

While the neuro-endocrine system, with its hypersensitivity to various low dose phenomena, may be a primary mediator for the various energy emanations, the occasional rapid manifestations of symptoms from exceedingly small doses may indicate some other yet undefined communications pathway in living organisms. It’s important to acknowledge the capacity of an organism to respond to external energy, and it’s time to recognize the possibility of an internal energy system within the body that might be resonant or dissonant with these environmental influences.

Magnetic fields and the human body

Back in 1989, I read a fascinating book called, “The Compass in Your Nose and Other Astonishing Facts About Humans,” by science writer Marc McCutcheon. The author provided evidence of trace amounts of magnetized iron in the human nose and suggested that its magnetic properties enable our sense of direction.

Other researchers have found that birds have magnetite in their beaks which may help them with their amazing navigational abilities to migrate long distances. [1] Still other researchers have found concentrations of magnetic particles in the human brain [2,3] and in other parts of the human body. [4] Research has just begun in evaluating the role of magnetite in health and in disease. [5] (People who wish to follow-up on this area of inquiry will benefit from doing a Google search of “magnetite” and “biomagnetite.”)

When one realizes that many parts of our body are infused with magnetic particles, one must also wonder how

these invisible but active forces and fields influence the body and its health. One might also wonder if treatments that mimic or resonate with these fields might be optimized in our health care system. The implications for having magnetic fields in the body could be significant, and this area of inquiry is inadequately explored by mainstream medicine.

Sadly, our sophisticated medical system has focused on biochemical process, while ignoring the fields and forces that influence biochemistry. Our modern medical instrumentation simply reinforces the biochemical processes. It isn't that we should ignore biochemistry (obviously), but our modern era beckons us to consider an integrative model of health and medicine so that the diversity of diagnostic and therapeutic processes can lead to the safest and highest quality health care. Until and unless our medical sciences assess and account for the field phenomena of the human organism, doctors will be blinded to knowing about interconnective forces in our bodies... and until this happens, doctors will be like meteorologists who try to predict weather by only looking at clouds.

It's no wonder that Albert Einstein, with his colleague Leopold Infeld, acknowledged that despite the invisibility of electromagnetic fields, "The electromagnetic field is, for the modern physicist, as real as the chair on which he sits." [6]

Conclusions

The primary alternative model to the vitalist/energetic model is that of an elaborate machine, though evolutionary biologist and science historian Stephen Jay Gould has cautioned, "a machine makes a poor model for a living organism." [7]

The newly published book, "Green Medicine: Challenging the Assumptions of Conventional Health Care," by Dr. Larry Maler-ba, considers the vitalistic viewpoint of health and healing to be so essential to the green medicine perspective that its first chapter is entitled "The Unifying Life Force." [8]

The fact of the matter is that American medical care embodies a mechanistic and reductionistic view of health and disease. Its treatments may effectively rid a person of a specific symptom, but it may be time to realize that simplistic and mechanistic thinking provide primarily only the guise of health improvement. It's therefore no wonder that American health care is ranked 37th in the world, while virtually all of the countries that have the greatest use of energy medicines are ranked at the top.

Further refinement and synthesis of the empirical basis for energy medicine is needed, and research on its diagnostic and therapeutic processes is essential, though I'm sure that some people whose income or paradigm of medicine or science is threatened will do their best to squash such investigation or integration.

Understanding the forces that tie and bind our body and mind, and those that connect us with nature will not be easy. Such forces and fields of life cannot be placed under a microscope, but they can be understood and studied. Energy medicine offers the potential for understanding some very real mysteries of nature, for developing some valuable health practices and for learning how to create healthy environments in which to live. This field of inquiry is on the cutting edge and needs the sharpest of minds to fathom its realities—and its limitations. Ultimately, the energy medicine paradigm proves a useful model to understand and explain healing.

Our discussion of energy medicine, as with many new ways of understanding phenomena, may not be readily accepted by the medical establishment. Thomas Kuhn, author of "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions," and popularizer of the word "paradigm," helps us understand why this may happen: "Scientific revolutions ... seem revolutionary only to those whose paradigms are affected by them. To outsiders they may ... seem like normal parts of the developmental process."

Energy medicine is a logical evolutionary step for medicine. I invite you to step out with us to help understand more fully its meaning, its depth, and its significance.

In the light of ALL of the above, it isn't surprising that America's most respected doctor, Mehmet Oz, MD, asserted in 2007 on the Oprah show, "The next big frontier in medicine is energy medicine." [9]

And finally, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist who discovered vitamin C, once asserted, "In every culture and in every medical tradition before ours, healing was accomplished by moving energy." [10]

It may be time for mainstream Western medicine to catch up with the past and to enter the future of real healing.

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