

Integrated medicine by expanding medical frontiers: need of the hour



Srinivasan BR

Correspondence to:

resure2@yahoo.com

Dr. Bharatwaj Resiure Srinivasan MD, Community Medicine, Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, DM Wayanad Institute of Medical Sciences, Kerala, India.

Editors for this Article:

Dr. A.K. Pradhan, MBBS, MD. Professor, KIMS, Amalapuram, Editor-In-Chief, Medical Science.

Dr. Brijesh Sathian, PhD, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community Medicine, MCOMS, Pokhara, Nepal

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Dear Sir,

It is with great concern that I humbly submit the following observations drawn out of years of personal experience based on constant unbiased enquiry. Presently the form of medicine called 'allopathy' seems to be considered as the main way of healing by most of the general population [1]. Being trained in this form of medicine which even today attracts the sharpest of brains to take up and master, I have over the years witnessed a variety of ailments that staunchly deny to respond to our brand of medicine, yet dissolve with ease with what we currently call as 'alternative medicine.' This is supported by scientific literature [2]. It might be easy for us to shove it off as un-scientific or hearsay but having seen such cases, as a part of the integrated healing process, I am forced to make the conclusion that western medicine in its current form is far from complete [3].

The variety of healing modalities besides allopathy that I have come across and tried to integrate in managing patients are Siddha, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturapathy, Yoga, Acupressure, Aromatherapy, traditional bone setting, massage healing, Varma healing, Cranio -sacral therapy and visualization. Many others that have not come into my sphere of experience include Unani, Crystal healing, Pranic healing, Reiki, Sujok therapy, Acupuncture, Past life healing, Spiritual healing, Hypnosis, Chiropracty, Tai-chi, Herbal-drug therapy Aura healing, Chakra healing . The list of available techniques keeps on expanding with time as they come more into the mainstream. Most of these healing modalities look at the human as a single whole entity and the process of healing in many ways is catered towards enhancing the inherent healing capacity of the individual and in the due course naturally affecting cure.

Alternative medicine is used by nearly fifty percent of the people inhabiting the developed countries [4]. One recent study in urban India revealed a reasonably high proportion of people with chronic diseases using alternative medicine. The use of home remedies and other alternative modalities of treatment is likely to be even higher in the predominantly rural Indian subcontinent with the availability and accessibility of allopathic healthcare not as dominant as in a urban setup [5]. This indicates the importance it is going to assume in the overall health care of communities in the times



to come. In our MBBS training, not even a basic introduction is given to any of these above techniques which I feel are very much relevant when exploring the concept of holistic healing. Detailed observation of parts is bound to enhance the load of available information and this is no doubt going to expand the frontiers of our knowledge but are we in the name of science focusing more on the miniscule and somehow in the bargain losing sight of the holistic picture? A whole is made of parts but simply an addition of parts does not make it whole as is stated in a famous medical book of pathology, "If you go too near the tree you lose sight of the forest".

May be it is time for us to re-explore and look at the process of training a healer (doctor) and in the curriculum make space for inclusion of these various other healing modalities to the extent that they are validated by current scientific observations as also dynamically update the same. The inclusion of yoga as a part of "sports and extracurricular including yoga" and "Foundation course" into the MBBS curriculum by the medical council of India is a welcome step in this direction [6]. I earnestly hope that the future will herald more inclusiveness and integration in the healing process that will promote health in the way the world health organization has defined it.

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Competing interests

None

Authors' information

Dr. Bharatwaj Resiure Srinivasan MD, Community Medicine, Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, DM Wayanad Institute Of Medical Sciences, Kerala, India.

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