

Ayurveda, Part I

John Amaro, LAc, DC, Dipl. Ac.(NCCAOM), Dipl.Med.Ac.(IAMA); Abbas Qutab, MD, DC, FIACA

Introduction

Those of you who were around in the early days of the '70s are vitally aware of a phenomena which occurred, namely the adoption of a new healing art which spread rapidly throughout the entire North American continent. I refer, of course, to acupuncture.

Today, with acupuncture being licensed in over half of the U.S., its practitioners being considered primary health care providers, and, in some states, physicians, acupuncture has earned a respected place alongside the conventional healing arts.

Given the fact there are more acupuncture colleges in California than there are chiropractic colleges in the world, is cause for alarm for a large proportion of our profession, especially for those DCs whose state law does not permit the use of acupuncture.

But as significant as acupuncture's growing popularity in the '70s, another healing art (which holds as much promise and was also born out of a foreign land, dating back thousands of years) looms on the horizon. It has already received very favorable press, been endorsed by the medical establishment, and is seeing thousands of patients heading for the doors of its practitioners. The science is ayurveda.

No, I don't feel it will replace acupuncture, but ayurveda holds a great deal of promise as being "the next frontier."

My very good friend and colleague, Abbas Qutab, M.D., D.C., F.I.A.C.A., has experience in ayurveda spanning nearly a quarter of a century. He has considerable expertise in ayurveda and has greatly contributed to its development as past house physician and surgeon for the district hospital in Bahawalnager, Pakistan. He is currently senior research assistant professor of New York Chiropractic College, as well as senior research fellow in neurosciences. He is also a postgraduate professor of acupuncture with the International Academy of Clinical Acupuncture.

I've asked Dr. Qutab to explain ayurveda in this two part series.

Ayurveda -- The Next Frontier in Healing, Part I

Ayurveda is the world's oldest scientific system of natural medicine, having its heritage in ancient India. It is formally recognized by the World Health Organization and is known to be a complete health care system, which emphasizes prevention of disease, as well as promotion of health and longevity.

The word ayurveda comes from two words in Sanskrit: ayur and veda. Ayur means life or life span, and veda means sacred knowledge or science. Ayurveda is therefore translated as "the science of life," which emphasizes its orientation toward prevention.

Ayurveda has several therapeutic and preventative approaches, which are based on the comprehensive understanding provided by the classical texts of the pathogenesis, symptomatology diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease.

Ayurveda holds that the primary force in the etiology of disease is imbalance resulting from disruption of homeostasis or immune mechanics. Ayurveda does not separate psyche from soma. It places equal importance on mental, emotional, and behavioral factors, which are seen as critical in the development of imbalances, hence disease.

Therapeutic modalities of ayurveda include: diet according to each person's individual psychophysiological constitution, herbs, neuromuscular and neurorespiratory integration programs, massage of specific points in the body, color therapy, and aromatherapy.

Ayurveda has captured the attention of physicians and scientists in the U.S. and all parts of the world, including the Soviet Union, where several thousand physicians have already been trained under the auspices of the USSR Center for Preventative Medicine, a division of the USSR Ministry of Health.

In the United States, ayurveda has been well received by the American Medical Association (AMA). Its recognition within allopathy is evident by a recent article on ayurveda published in the May 22, 1991 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Presently, courses in ayurveda are approved by the American College of Preventative Medicine and are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, where medical doctors receive C.M.E. Category I credits for their license renewal.

Ayurveda has detailed scientific literature consisting of several classical medical texts including Treaties on Medical Ethics, and Physician-Patient Relationship. In addition, the ayurvedic pharmacopeia is vast, including thousands of plants and plant products, many of which are known therapeutic agents such as digitalis and rauwolfia.

Recently, The National Cancer institute funded 11 separate studies on ayurvedic herbal preparations, as agents to be investigated for their possible role in the prevention and treatment of cancer.

Ayurveda represents a newly found knowledge for the physician, which answers many questions raised from the increasing interest in fields such as psychoneuroimmunology and non-pharmacological approaches to disease.

Ayurveda can be perfectly blended in the scope of chiropractic, because, like chiropractic, ayurveda offers the knowledge to end the self-perpetuating tradition of sickness in the world. All diagnostic, therapeutic, or preventative procedures applied in ayurveda are completely non-invasive and natural.

In the ayurvedic framework, the body is viewed not merely as a sophisticated machine, but a physical expression on the self-interacting dynamics of an underlying field of intelligence. This concept is also the basis of chiropractic innate intelligence. These views by ayurvedic physicians and chiropractors are completely in accord with the recent unified field scientific theories of quantum physics. These theories describe the most fundamental level of nature as an underlying abstract field, which, through its own self-interacting dynamics, projects itself as matter. In fact, ayurveda identifies pure consciousness, the simplest form of human awareness as the unified field, and places it as the basis of the physiology rather than as an epiphenomenon of the nervous system. This view has also been articulated by the founders of quantum mechanics who felt that "mind stuff" underlies the physical

universe and projects itself as matter.

In a quantum interpretation, a patient's thoughts, emotions, and memories are the fluctuations that give rise to cellular processes. From the chiropractic viewpoint, we tend to consider physiological and pathological processes as a neural phenomena. However, this concept cannot be unequivocally accepted, since the clinical results achieved in chiropractic do not totally fit into the known patterns of neural pathways. D.D. Palmer, the genius who founded the profession, seemed to clearly understand this when he wrote, "A subluxation does not restrain or liberate vital energy. Vital energy is expressed in functional activity. A subluxation may impinge against nerves; the transmitting channel may increase or decrease the momentum of impulses, not energy. Vital energy is not transmitted through the nervous system or any other, it is expressed in functional acts."

It appears the concepts of chiropractic conceived by D.D. Palmer were ahead of his time, and he clearly understood and wrote concepts which many within the profession are still struggling to understand. These concepts, however, were understood by the ayurvedic physicians 5,000 years ago and are being verified by the modern-day scientists and physicists.

The American Academy of Ayurvedic Medicine (AAAM) and The International Academy of Clinical Acupuncture are dedicated to the promotion of Ayurvedic Oriental Healing Arts, and also the concepts of D.D. Palmer, on which chiropractic was conceived, to all primary health care providers such as chiropractors, medical doctors, naturopaths, acupuncturists, etc.

Presently, courses in ayurveda are being offered by the AAAM, which are compatible with the international chiropractic licensing laws. License renewal through New York Chiropractic College has been applied for in all states.

John A. Amaro, D.C., F.I.A.C.A. DIPL. AC
Carefree, Arizona

Abbas Qutab, M.D., D.C., F.I.A.C.A.
Lynn, Maryland

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