

Shifting the Paradigm

Since the founding of the germ theory of disease, scientists have offered a holistic perspective. At long last, their efforts are taking hold

By Jeanne Ohm, D.C.

I grew up in a household afraid of germs. When my sister was born, my father had all guests put on surgical masks to protect her. We all had our tonsils taken out “just because,” and antibiotics were considered a miracle discovered by science. My generation was the one first introduced to fast food—we really believed it was food! Our mothers were sold the idea that formula could be better than breast milk. So began the modern, manipulated, misdirected generation.

Fortunately, before I had my kids, I was introduced to chiropractic. I discovered the body’s amazing intelligence and its innate ability to heal itself. I learned about nourishment, a healthy attitude and a functional nervous system. Among the many teachings of chiropractic’s founder, D.D. Palmer, and his son, B.J., I was most fascinated with B.J.’s comment, “If the ‘germ theory of disease’ were correct, there’d be no one living to believe it.”

Fortunately, my husband and I were able to live the “chiropractic lifestyle” with our kids. Years before the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended breastfeeding (yes, they finally did in the ‘90s) we were strong advocates for it. Long before the allopathic healthcare system was recognizing the importance of nutrition, we as chiropractors were recommending and consuming good, wholesome, pesticide-free foods.

In 1951, again far ahead of the times, B.J. Palmer published a statement warning against the use of antibiotics. We knew that germs were not the cause of disease and we cautioned against the overuse of antibiotics decades before *USA Today* headlined their dangers in the 1990s. We also let our kids play in the sunshine (without

toxic sunscreen) and in the backyard dirt, decades before the study came out saying exposure to animals and dirt is healthier than living in antimicrobial households. We insisted that symptoms should not be suppressed with drugs, but rather allowed to run their course while addressing the cause (which is actually the path of healing, not disease). When we questioned the use of vaccines (a practice rooted in mainstream, germ-phobic theories) we were further scorned for our blasphemous perspective.

We met other practitioners—naturopaths, homeopaths, midwives and herbalists, as well as parents who also understood these basic principles—and we rejoiced that there were others who were living from this logical but undermined paradigm. But we remained a marginalized group. Often ostracized, certainly ridiculed...and in some instances, violently opposed.

*“All truth passes through three stages.
First, it is ridiculed.
Second, it is violently opposed.
Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”*
—Arthur Schopenhauer

Understanding the Paradigm

The germ theory proposes that microorganisms are the overriding cause of many diseases. It was initiated by Louis Pasteur in the 19th century when he examined humans and animals that showed signs of being sick and found that they had very high levels of bacteria and viruses compared to those who were not sick. He then made the assumption that germs infect our body and cause sickness and disease. Pasteur, along with German physician Robert Koch, is considered one of the fathers of the germ theory. The practice of allopathic, conventional medicine to this day is still based on this theory.

Less known is that several of Pasteur’s contemporaries refuted his idea that germs cause disease. Claude Bernard,

TWO THEORIES OF DISEASE

GERM THEORY	CELLULAR THEORY
1. Disease arises from microorganisms outside the body.	1. Disease arises from microorganisms within the cells of the body.
2. Microorganisms are generally to be guarded against.	2. These intracellular microorganisms normally function to build and assist in the metabolic processes of the body.
3. The function of microorganisms is constant.	3. The function of these organisms changes to assist in the catabolic (disintegration) processes of the host organism when that organism dies or is injured, which may be chemical as well as mechanical.
4. The shapes and colors of microorganisms are constant.	4. Microorganisms change their shapes and colors to reflect the medium upon which they feed.
5. Every disease is associated with a particular microorganism.	5. Every disease is associated with a particular condition.
6. Microorganisms are primary causal agents.	6. Micro-organisms become “pathogenic” as the health of the host organism deteriorates. Hence, the condition of the host organism is the primary causal agent.
7. Disease can “strike” anybody.	7. Disease is built by unhealthy conditions.
8. To prevent disease we have to “build defenses.”	8. To prevent disease we have to create health.

Source: *Immunization: The Reality Behind the Myth*, by Walene James

a colleague and physiologist of that era, resolved that the health of the individual was determined by her internal environment. “The terrain is everything,” he wrote; “the germ is nothing.” Other scientists tested Bernard’s theory. Elie Metchnikoff, a Russian immunologist a generation younger than Bernard and Pasteur, suggested that a synergistic interaction exists between bacteria and its host. He, too, claimed that germs were not the problem. To prove it, he consumed cultures containing millions of cholera bacteria; he lived to write about it, and didn’t even get sick.

His contemporary, French chemist and biologist Antoine Bechamp, also believed that a healthy body would be immune to harmful bacteria, and only a weakened body could harbor harmful bacteria. His research contributed to this understanding when he discovered that there were living organisms in our bodies called microzymas, which essentially form into healthy cells in the healthy body and morph into unhealthy cells when the terrain is less than ideal. The conclusion: Germs do not invade us, but rather are “grown” within us when there is diseased tissue to live on.

Rudolf Virchow, another 19th-century scientist (dubbed the Father of Pathology), wrote, “If I could live

my life over again, I would devote it to proving that germs seek their natural habitat—diseased tissue—rather than being the cause of diseased tissue; e.g. mosquitoes seek the stagnant water, but do not cause the pool to become stagnant.”

In this day and age, we have been taught that germs—bacteria and viruses—are bad, which ignores the vital functions they perform. They are designed to decompose dead and dying material. Germs are our planet’s recyclers; without them, life on earth couldn’t exist.

Out of the billions of bacteria and viruses we have in our bodies, most are considered “friendly germs.” Bacteria is essential for proper digestion and it scavenges dead cells in our body so they can be replaced by new healthy cells. When our body tissues become weak due to poor health management, normal bacteria and viruses start to multiply and scavenge our unhealthy, dying cells. Our immune system responds as a survival mechanism and we develop the symptoms of being “sick,” but the germs are just doing their job.

The question then becomes, what creates sickness and illness? Is it the germs or is it an unhealthy body?

It has been said that on Pasteur’s deathbed, he admitted that Bernard was right and he, Pasteur, was



THE BODY, LIKE ALL OF NATURE, EXISTS BY MAINTAINING A STATE OF BALANCE. IT IS DEPENDENT UPON AN ENVIRONMENT THAT NOURISHES AND NURTURES WITH INTERCONNECTIVITY AND COOPERATION BETWEEN WHOLE SYSTEMS, AND AN UNDERLYING RECOGNITION OF INTELLIGENCE AND A RESPECT FOR THE NATURAL PROCESSES AND ORDER.

ANTI ANTIBIOTIC

In *The Green Book*, published in 1951, B.J. Palmer cautioned against using antibiotics, incorporating this analysis from French endocrinologist Jean Gautier. “To begin with, a particular medicine will cure a number of illnesses, then little by little a certain number elude it; next, those on which it has effect, demand larger and larger doses. This is the case with the sulfamides and the antibiotics so widely used today. These products are so ill adapted to our organism that a certain number of individuals become intolerant of some and ‘resist’ others. Doctors cannot succeed in understanding why it is enough for one person to have been more or less in contact with a sick person treated by antibiotics and then see these medicines become ineffective and even provoke a serious advancement of the disease. It is because modern medicine finds its therapeutic means more and more in the retorts of chemists that it cares so little about physiological and endocrinological phenomena.”

wrong. Nonetheless, an era of antibiotic drugs, chemical pesticides and herbicides, vaccines and antibacterial soaps has ensued, resulting in a germ-phobic society and a pharmaceutical empire to lead the attack. But even worse, all of these weapons have interfered with the body’s natural microbiome and impaired our immunity.

Fast forward to June 2012, when the release of coordinated research from the Human Microbiome Project Consortium organized by the National Institutes of Health rocked the world. As *The New York Times* reported, “200 scientists at 80 institutions sequenced the genetic material of bacteria taken from 250 healthy people. They discovered more strains than they had ever imagined—as many as a thousand bacterial strains on each person. And each person’s collection of microbes was different from the next person’s. To the scientists’ surprise, they also found genetic signatures of disease-causing bacteria lurking in everyone’s microbiome. But instead of making people ill, or even infectious, these disease-causing microbes simply live peacefully among their neighbors.”

Instead of the “one germ, one disease” theory that

has dominated allopathic medicine for centuries, these findings imply that there is an entire ecosystem of bacteria symbiotically at work in the body, a concept understood by holistic practitioners for centuries. “This is a whole new way of looking at human biology and human disease,” says Dr. Phillip Tarr, a researcher and professor of pediatrics at the Washington University School of Medicine. “It’s awe-inspiring and it also offers incredible new opportunities.”

The following quote by Ronald J. Glasser, M.D., sums up the health crossroads we now face. This former assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota writes, “It is the body that is the hero, not science, not antibiotics...not machines or new devices. The task of the physician today is what it has always been, to help the body do what it has learned so well to do on its own during its unending struggle for survival—to heal itself. It is the body, not medicine, that is the hero.” As more doctors realize the self-evident principles of supporting the terrain, perhaps the allopathic model of killing the “bad” germs to fight disease may finally shift to improving the terrain to support the friendly bacteria.

The body, like all of nature, exists by maintaining a state of balance. It is dependent upon an environment that nourishes and nurtures with interconnectivity and cooperation between whole systems, and an underlying recognition of intelligence and a respect for the natural processes and order. Therefore, the essentials for a healthy terrain can be broken into several general premises: Nourishing the Terrain, Coordinating the Function and Trusting the Process.

Nourishing the Terrain

When we think of nourishment, we naturally reflect on nutrition...the food necessary to establish a healthy terrain. After decades of propaganda leading us to believe that commercially produced “foods” are OK, we are coming to a rude awakening that we have deviated far from the natural, whole foods that truly nourish our bodies. Because this critical awareness is not upheld by all supporting systems in our society (agricultural, educational, economical, political, medical), only proactive individuals are making this difficult transition. We must be vigilant in selecting the foods we eat, how they are grown, how they are prepared and their consequent ability to nourish our cells. We know the importance of organically grown vegetables and fruits. Finding the best sources and preparations for our families may not be as convenient as we would like, but is certainly worth the extra effort. Our Nutrition section in this issue (page 42) offers a few important suggestions to incorporate nutrient-dense foods and eliminate those that overload us. Included are family-tested recipes that improve the terrain and enhance immune system function.

Coordinating the Function

The classic medical text *Gray’s Anatomy* tells us that the nervous system is the master control system of the body, determining the function of all systems, all functions and all organs. Newer to science is the profound interconnectivity between the nervous system and immune system. Once thought of as separate, these systems are now considered intertwined. It is now widely accepted that a healthy immune system supports nervous system function, and vice versa. This is very important for us to recognize if we want to create a healthy terrain.

The nervous and immune systems are interconnected in several known ways. Adrenal glands are one common link. Chemicals and hormones that are produced by cells of both systems are another connection. Additionally, research shows that the brain uses nerve cells to communicate directly with the immune system.

Chiropractic care was first linked to improved immunity during the deadly flu epidemic of 1917 and 1918, when chiropractic patients fared better than the general population. This observation spurred a study of the field. The data reported that flu victims under chiropractic care had an estimated .25 percent death rate, considerably less than the normal rate of 5 percent among flu victims who received no chiropractic care.

In 1936, pioneering endocrinologist Hans Selye began groundbreaking research on the effects of stress on our health. B.J. Palmer tells us:

Selye’s great contribution to science was this clear concept, that disease affects people according to their previously developed ability to adapt. The writer goes on to relate that the physician prefers to hear that you have had childhood diseases rather than avoided them. He knows that a bout of harmless chickenpox while you were a child, will probably immunize you for life, but that if you contract it first as an adult, it could run a very serious course. This is somewhat of a reversal to medical thinking in years past.

This may seem strange, but the writer has this to say regarding antibiotics. “All too often, a patient will insist on a shot of glamorous penicillin or some newer antibiotic for a mild infection. The physician will explain that the drug is not necessary—that it is better for the body to use its own defenses—but the determined patient shops around until he finds someone who will administer it anyhow.” “The frequent result is that, although the individual’s own natural resistance would have conquered the infection, the antibiotic suddenly robs the body of the germs necessary to stimulate the antibody producing mechanism into action. And, a stubborn chronic disease takes hold, against which, antibiotics are now powerless.”

In chiropractic we understand that nerve system function can be interfered with by subluxations, which create interferences to the normal transmission of nerve impulses. When this occurs, any and all systems are affected. Certainly immune system function, dependent on proper functioning of the nervous system, can be impaired as well.

Since then, additional studies have supported chiropractic care to improve immunity. One study found that disease-fighting white blood cell counts were higher just 15 minutes after spinal adjustments. In a similar study, the immune system response in HIV-positive patients under regular care for six months showed a 48 percent increase in white blood cell counts. Conversely, the group that did not receive chiropractic adjustments

LACK OF EASE

D.D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic, took the word *disease* and added a hyphen: *Dis-ease* is a non-entity, he explained, like dark and cold. Dark is the absence of light (the entity). Cold is the absence of heat (the entity). Dis-ease is the absence of ease—the entity, which can also be termed the reality—the achievable, the norm, the expected. Ah, feel it? The emotional threat is discharged already.

experienced a 7.96 percent decrease in immunity cells. More research is certainly warranted.

Trusting the Process

You may eat a perfect diet of raw organic, biodynamically grown whole foods, drink purified water, jog five miles a day, and get adjusted weekly, but if you are overcome with negative emotions enhanced by adversarial thinking, you will not be healthy. Your immune system, via your nervous system, listens to your inner thoughts.

Holistic healing practices have always recognized the relationship between thoughts and health. In 1910, D.D. Palmer introduced the idea of the three Ts. He explained that thoughts, traumas and toxins could cause distress to the nervous system, impairing its ability to function.

The science of Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) studies the interaction between thoughts, their effects on emotions, and the resulting immune system function via the nervous system. In 1985, research by neuropharmacologist Candace Pert showed that neuropeptide-specific receptors are present on the walls of cells in both the brain and the immune system. This revealed an interdependency between emotions and immunity via the central nervous system. Her work gave scientific credence to the ancient healing practices that have accepted the mind-body relationship. In her book *Molecules of Emotion*, she writes, “We know that the immune system, like the central nervous system, has memory and the capacity to learn. Thus, it could be said that intelligence

is located not only in the brain but in cells that are distributed throughout the body, and that the traditional separation of mental processes, including emotions, from the body is no longer valid.”

That said, being conscious of our emotions is imperative in understanding health. For example, take fear, an underlying emotion that has an immense impact on health. In previous editorials and numerous additional articles throughout *PATHWAYS*, we have looked at the stifling effects of fear on our well-being and normal, natural function. Fear propels us into the fight-or-flight mode—an override of our sympathetic nervous system. In this defensive state, our bodies limit cellular reproduction and growth as the systems of protection are



A MIND AT PEACE

In PATHWAYS we offer several sections to give you time to pause, reflect and absorb a healthier perspective—Gratitude, A Moment of Truth and Mind–Body–Spirit. Find these sections from each issue on our PATHWAYS website, print out your favorites and use them as daily meditations. Also, our Pathways Connect groups offer a community of local, like-minded parents meeting in holistic practices to support and nurture the family wellness lifestyle. Find a Gathering Group near you on our site and enhance your mind-body healing.

activated. To paraphrase Bruce Lipton, we cannot live in a state of imbalanced protection and growth at the same time. He maintains that the state of being that fosters growth is love, and that the protection mode is activated by fear. When we are in a state of unresolved fear, we cannot heal, regenerate or be well.

A wise person once said that “fear” could be an acronym for “False Evidence Appearing Real.” When we look at the germ theory and feel the underlying emotion it produces, we can clearly see it is fear-based. The terms used in the course of allopathic medicine reflect this fearful, warlike mentality. We have to kill the cancer, destroy the germ, fight the disease, be rescued in labor, struggle through breastfeeding—the list goes on, with a mental perspective whose constant is fear.

Ah...and here is the killer (pun intended): The solution to these “problems” cannot be accomplished by our own selves; we are dependent upon an outside entity (in this case, modern allopathic medicine) for salvation. For example: Germs are our enemy and our only solution to overcoming them is that hopefully, someday, somebody will find that magic potion that can “kill those germs.” Until then, it is hopeless. Responsibility for our own lives has been stripped, and this disempowered state of mind creates even more fearful emotions. Healing in this model becomes an emotionally charged, futile pursuit.

So, how do we break the cycle of fear? Other than reading inspiring words of wisdom and surrounding ourselves with like-minded practitioners and friends, Pert advises us to get in touch with our bodies: “Your body is your subconscious mind and you can’t heal it by talk alone.” Bodywork, movement therapy, simple exercise, spinal adjustments and massage can all release stuck emotions by clearing blockages to normal body function. Ancient healing arts and modern holistic practitioners all recognize and support the mind-body connection in healing. Pert concludes, “...almost every other culture but ours recognizes the role played by some kind of emotional catharsis or energy release in healing.”

Let’s be honest—the role of the mind in healing is not new, it has just been allopathically suppressed. Hippocrates (the Father of Medicine) made these statements centuries ago:

- Humans are created to be healthy as long as they are whole: body, mind and spirit.
- People are characterized by self-healing properties that come from within and an innate healing force.
- Health and harmony is the normal state for all life.

Now, the accepted definitions of health are returning to Hippocrates’ way of thinking. *Dorland’s Medical Dictionary* defines it as “a state of optimal physical mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.”

Pert agrees, “Last but definitely not least, health is much more than the absence of illness,” she writes. “Live in an unselfish way that promotes a state of spiritual bliss that truly helps to prevent illness. Wellness is trusting in the ability and desire of your body-mind to heal and improve itself, if given half a chance. Take responsibility for your own health—and illness.”

I am excited to see science catch up to the holistic paradigm, challenging fear-based theories and supporting the return of logical wisdom. The reason why most holistic practices did not accept the germ theory from its onset was because the major premise of their healing model recognizes there is an innate intelligence in living matter: There is order, synchronicity, and a respect for natural law. It is a shift in consciousness, toward understanding and adhering to these vitalistic principles, that will have the most profound effect on our individual selves, our families and the future of humanity. 🧠

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