The roots of naturopathy

TINA HAUSER, ND
IVA LOYD, ND, RFP

...
health. Disease affects the entire person, not just a specific organ or system.

- **Doctor as Teacher (Docere)** comes from the Latin word “to teach.” The role of a naturopath / naturopathic doctor is to educate about the factors that affect health and disease so that individuals are more informed about the impact of their choices and so that they are more capable of maintaining their own health. Docere involves collaboration with the patient and other health professionals.

- **Disease Prevention and Health Promotion** involves promoting a healthy lifestyle, assessing risk factors, determining susceptibility to disease, and making appropriate therapeutic interventions. It involves assessing environmental and external factors that might be affecting health, determining the impact of social relationships and community on health (as well as genetic/hereditary factors), and assessing the impact of medical interventions to-date.

- **Wellness or Wellbeing** as a principle has been added by a number of naturopathic educational institutions, including Wellpark College in New Zealand and Bastyr University in the United States. “Wellbeing” is composed of the 2 words “well” and “being.” The concept of “wellbeing” indicates that it not only “wellness” that is required for health, but also “being” near on a physical, psychological, and spiritual level.

**Naturopathic Theories**

Since the beginning of time, health practitioners have been searching for theories or laws that guide healing and that assist in understanding health and disease. What was discovered when we reviewed the curriculum from the schools is that schools in North America taught the philosophies of vitalism and holism, went into details on the naturopathic principles, and discussed the theories of Emunctories and Therapeutic Order. Naturopathic schools in Europe recognized the naturopathic principles as core to naturopathic practice, but went into details on many of the theories that preceded, and that are incorporated into, the naturopathic principles.

A chart from the 2^nd survey (Table 2) illustrates the consistency among naturopathic theories taught in naturopathic schools. The results of that survey were published in July 2016 in the WNF document titled “WNF – Naturopathic Roots Report: Findings from the Naturopathic Roots Committee Survey” and can be accessed on the WNF website, under “Publications.”

One of the goals in delineating the naturopathic philosophies, principles, and theories is to avoid overlap and to clarify the proper placement of key concepts. For example, the theory Vital Force is synonymous with the naturopathic philosophy Vitalism; Integration of the Individual and Naturopathic Triad of Health are integrated in the naturopathic principle, Treat the Whole Person (tollus totum). Some of the naturopathic theories are concepts used throughout the naturopathic encounter, such as Humoral Theory. Other naturopathic theories, such as Unity of Disease and Theory of Toxemia, are concepts that have been incorporated into the naturopathic principle, Treat the Cause (tollus causae).

The remaining naturopathic theories – Naturopathic Cures, Value of a Fever, Therapeutic Order, Hering’s Law of Cure, and Emunctory Theory – are used to guide naturopathic treatment regimens.

Three core naturopathic theories – Humoral Theory, Emunctory Theory, and Therapeutic Order – are considered core to the practice of naturopathy globally and are expanded upon in the White Paper:

- **Humoral Theory** was an integral part of the origin of naturopathy. It explains the transmission of the elemental theory on the human body. Humoral Theory is a concept that spans all aspects of the naturopathic therapeutic encounter, including assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.

- **Emunctory Theory** states that proper elimination of toxins is essential to overall health. Eliminating toxins is often the first required treatment focus, especially for chronic disease. Elimination of toxins assists vitality and its corollary; conversely, lack of elimination blocks vitality or vital force. The primary emunctory pathways include the lungs (breath), kidneys (urine), bowels (stool), skin (sweating), menses/circulation, and voice (speaking). Secondary emunctory pathways include all other ways in which the body excretes toxins, including nasal discharge, eye discharge, and skin eruptions.

- **Therapeutic Order** was proposed as a naturopathic theory by Jared L. Zeff in 1997. Together with Pamela Snider, they collaborated in 1998 with the AANMC colleges to develop this theory. In the article from Zeff, Snider, and Stephen P. Myers, the Therapeutic Order is described in detail as a hierarchy of healing. The Therapeutic Order is a natural hierarchy of therapeutic intervention, based on or dictated by observations of the nature of the healing process, from ancient times through the present. It follows a natural ordering of the modalities of naturopathic medicine and their application.

The WNF White Paper on naturopathic philosophies, principles, and theories will be followed up with other White Papers, such as one that describes naturopathic practice. To access the WNF White Paper, visit the WNF website at http://worldnaturopathycouncil.org/wnf-publications/.

Tables available online at ndnr.com

---

**Functional Medicine Success**

**A Dinner Presentation with Dr. Peter Osborne**

Coming soon to a city near you!

Learn practical tips you can use to start growing your practice immediately.

- **9/28/17:** Chicago, IL
- **11/9/17:** Atlanta, GA
- **10/12/17:** Washington, DC
- **1/18/18:** Los Angeles, CA

Dr. Peter Osborne, best-selling author, nationally recognized speaker, and founder of the annual Functional Medicine Success Summit (FunctionalMedicineSuccessSummit.com) will share his proven marketing techniques for growing a functional medicine practice.

If you’re new to functional medicine or looking to grow your functional medicine practice, you don’t want to miss this LIVE event.