

e-Newsletter

Successful July 2009 Colorado Integrative Medicine Conference (CIMC): focus on mind-body medicine

*YMCA of the Rockies
Estes Park, Colorado*



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Executive Director's Message

Welcome to the AlterMed Research Foundation e-Newsletter. In this issue, Shiela references an interview of Dr. James Gordon, the Keynote Speaker for our July 17-19 Colorado Integrative Medicine Conference (CIMC) so our audience can learn more about this extraordinary physician after hearing his talk "Mind-Body Medicine is the Heart of All Healthcare". We are extremely privileged to have had him as our Keynote. Dr. Gordon is a compassionate man with a strong desire to help people in pain. He served as the chairman of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy in 2000-2002. Not only is he interested in the mind-body connection and a recognized leader in this field, he is interested in the place where the mind and body connect with the larger world.

Other topics in this issue include Healthcare Reform and a brief introduction to chakras. In light of the Obama administration's interest in healthcare reform and health prevention, Rebecca explains why Integrative Medicine fits the bill to support the prevention goal and reduce costs. For our audience who are interested to get a glimpse of Donna Eden's book on "Energy Medicine", Lindsay provides an overview of the chakras from her book review. In closing, I am grateful for our July CIMC conference sponsors, speakers, attendees, exhibitors, and volunteers for making CIMC09 a success. Also thank you to our volunteers for their contribution to this e-Newsletter.

Best Wishes,
Kerri Diamant
info@AlterMedResearch.org

Alternative Therapies Interview with Keynote Speaker: Dr. James Gordon adapted by Shiela Bushanam

Dr. James S. Gordon, M.D, is the Founder and Director of The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, a Clinical Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Family Medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine, and served as the Chairman of the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Policy. Dr. Gordon has created ground-breaking programs of comprehensive mind-body healing for physicians, medical students, and other health professionals; for people with cancer, depression, and other chronic illnesses; and for traumatized children and families in Bosnia, Kosovo, Israel and Gaza

as well as in post-9/11 New York and post-Katrina southern Louisiana. At our July 17-19 Colorado Integrative Medicine Conference (CIMC 2009): focus on Mind-Body Medicine, Dr. Gordon served as our keynote speaker, introducing the latest approaches on mind-body medicine and exploring the current necessity for this growing healthcare model with self-care at the center. Here is a brief interview of him adapted from Alternative Therapies Mar/April 2006 , Vol. 12, No. 2 Issue "JAMES S. GORDON, MD: CONNECTING MIND, BODY, AND BEYOND. This interview was conducted by Karolyn A. Gazella and Suzanne Snyder.



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An Integrative Health Approach Grows out of the Current Recession by Rebecca Cox



The recession has given all of us a bit of a wake up call. Now is the time for us to go back and look over our major systems in a place to see where they can be fixed so that this country can thrive once again. A quick glance at our health care system and you will see that it is a system that this country is losing a lot of money in relative to health care costs in countries, such as Germany, Japan, and Taiwan. ¹

You probably heard that President Obama put aside \$634 billion for health care reform.² The latest healthcare reform figure is now estimated to be \$1 trillion. What you may have not realized is that a large portion of this money will likely be put towards developing a health

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A Brief Introduction to Chakras

by Lindsay Ball

In the modern world people rarely find time to take care of themselves. Donna Eden has acknowledged this problem and decided to share some of her techniques for balancing mind, body, and spirit with the general public. Her book, *Energy Medicine*, discusses the importance of tuning into your subtle energies and balancing them. A person's subtle energies include terms we've all heard about, but some of us are not sure of what they mean or the roles they play in our lives.

Many have heard the phrase, you need to cleanse your chakras, but what exactly is a chakra and how in the world do you cleanse it? The chakra system is a series of energy centers along the center of the body. One of the first researchers in her field, Valerie Hunt performed a revolutionary experiment at UCLA's Energy Fields Laboratory. She discovered that certain areas of the body "produced very rapid oscillations." These centers of high

energy match age-old depictions of the chakras.

Each of these energy centers is representative of some aspect of an individual's personality. The first chakra is known as the Root Chakra and is traditionally red in color. This typically tells the story of where you came from, your early childhood memories, past life memories, as well as hardships experienced by your ancestors. The second chakra is known as the Womb Chakra, which is a person's creativity center and is traditionally orange. This is known as the Womb Chakra because it is located where the womb is and is also shaped like a womb. The third chakra is known as the Solar Plexus Chakra. This is most always yellow in color and is representative of a person's sense of self. The fourth chakra is the Heart Chakra. This green-colored chakra weaves the story of love through many

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Brief Introduction to Chakras (Continued)

generations. The next chakra in line is the Throat Chakra, which is blue in color. This energy center is a person's expression center. A person may have a faint Throat Chakra if they have difficulty standing up for themselves and tend to let people walk all over them. The sixth chakra is the Pituitary Chakra, which is more commonly referred to as a person's Third Eye. This energy center is located directly between the eyes. In the sixth chakra a person's identity is created. This is also a center of psychic energy and is traditionally indigo in color. A person with an active Pituitary Chakra is likely to have clairvoyant moments. The seventh and final chakra is located on top of a person's head and is called the Pineal, or Crown, Chakra. This chakra is violet in color and an individual's hotline to higher spiritual planes. People with an open Crown Chakra may seem to be in another world.

Eden asserts that these energy centers need to be balanced and cleansed on a regular basis, especially in today's faced-paced world. Eden suggests that when you are feeling particularly critical of yourself that you cradle your chakras. You do this by putting your hands in a cradling position, as you would cradle a baby, in the area of the individual chakra you feel needs work. Eden suggests you thank your chakra and express your gratitude for its existence. Your chakras will listen and your mood will most likely change.

Donna Eden provides many more tips for balancing and replenishing your energies. She discusses nine different subtle energy systems in the body as well as testimonies by her clients and professionals in the field. Donna Eden's book can be a true gem to help one naturally allow their energy to flourish in a faced-paced modern world.



Gordon Interview (Continued)

AT: What are the big changes that need to take place in our present healthcare system?

Dr Gordon: Let me begin with education. We need to balance the acquisition of knowledge with a deepening in wisdom. That has to happen throughout the education of physicians and all healthcare professionals. That is our ancient heritage. In every aboriginal tradition and in the high classical medicines of Greece, China, and India, there was always a balance between wisdom and knowledge. And we've lost it.

Simple courses in "patient-doctor communication" are not enough. They are good, but they are just not getting to the depth that is needed. That depth has to do with knowing yourself as a human being as well as a physician and healer, being yourself, and experiencing yourself and your own struggles and possibilities. It isn't just communicating with another person. It's becoming a whole person yourself, and being one with others. If wisdom comes back into medicine, everything else will follow. When you're not so preoccupied with how much knowledge you have and whether you can quote the journal articles better than the next guy (God knows, I have that gene in me, too), you can be more open. When you experience the healing that is possible for you, you gain perspective on your fears and prejudices. You become more open to everyone and everything else – your patients, your colleagues, even the people who think you're an idiot for being interested in these things.

You also realize more clearly that you are here to serve others. All the techniques we learn – Western and otherwise – are ways for us to serve others. It's not about which medicine is good or bad. It's about which medicine is most appropriate – whether it's Chinese medicine, Western medicine, or naturopathic medicine – and about using whatever we have in a way that is most compassionate. We also need to create communities of healers. It's certainly good for

people to want to learn and to have journal clubs, publish papers, and to go to conferences. But it's more than that. It's really creating a community where people – okay, I'll say it – love one another.

One of the most satisfying groups I do each year is a mind- body skills group for Georgetown medical students. We've been doing some research on these groups and have found that the medical students who participate feel less stressed, do better academically, and feel more hopeful about being doctors. These are certainly rewarding outcomes. But one of the really beautiful things is that they also feel much more compassion for their fellow students. Over the course of 11 weeks, a group of people who were rather fearful and competitive create a community of playful, tender compassion.

One of the problems in medicine and in the health professions in general is that people tend to feel isolated. There's a lot of burnout. Healthcare professionals don't feel supported in what they're doing. I think one of the reasons people like surgery is because they're part of a team, working together. But why not be more than just a team? Why not have the compassion and connection that comes from being a whole community of people caring for one another, working toward the common goal of healing? That's what the Center for Mind-Body Medicine is about, as well as our groups at Georgetown and everywhere else.

This healthcare system also has to be based on helping people to help themselves and one another, an approach in which self-care is central to the education of all children and the prevention and treatment of all illness. In this powerful, beautiful system, approaches that require a professional and promote healing – like acupuncture, supplements, and manipulation – are secondary to self-care, and tools like drugs and surgery are used only when absolutely necessary.

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Recession (Continued)

care system that will provide you with more opportunity to use preventative care.

The medical care system in the United States currently overlooks preventative care. The current “fix-it” model that is in place is set up to treat a disease that has already progressed and requires drugs, surgeries, and other invasive and expensive treatments. It turns out that this model comes with quite a price tag.

On March 20, 2009, in an article in the Huffington Post, a doctor famous for his emphasis on the importance of a healthy lifestyle for good health was quoted on the costs of the current U.S. health care system. Dr. Dean Ornish stated that, “Last year \$2.1 trillion was spent on medical care, with 95% of it spent treating disease after it occurred.” One study predicted that preventative programs could provide \$81 billion in annual savings. This makes preventative programs pretty attractive in a time of recession.²

For you, the patient, this means that you may have easier access to programs that teach you how to eat better, handle your stress, or lose weight. This will be a major change from the current system that provides disease care instead of wellness care. In order to successfully make this change, not only must the health care system be reformed to include preventative care in regular treatment, but doctors will also need to modify the way they practice medicine. Doctors could reduce their reliance on drugs and begin leveraging a more integrative approach. That is, an integrative approach that brings together conventional medicine and alternative therapies in order to prevent the onset of diseases, instead of just treating diseases with money-draining treatments.

Many doctors agree that the model proposed by Integrative Medicine may hold the solution for reforming our current health care system to a cost – effective one. Dr. Andrew Weil, a graduate from Harvard, states “Integrative Medicine can offer low-cost alternatives to pharmaceutical drugs and

surgery for many conditions that now drain our health care resources.” The low-cost alternatives used in Integrative Medicine include the use of herbs, acupuncture, relaxation techniques, lifestyle changes, and supplements among many others.

Dr. Andrew Weil is also the founder of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. This is a program that is dedicated to teaching medical professionals Integrative Medicine.

Health professionals may also choose to attend some of the Integrative Medicine conferences that are being held across the country. AlterMed Research Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Fort Collins, Colorado hosted a conference in Estes Park, Colorado in July. AlterMed is dedicated to the promotion of Integrative Medicine through education and research.

With the support of non-profits like AlterMed, educational programs like the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, and a President who believes in the value of preventative medicine, a new Integrative medicinal philosophy will soon thrive in this country. This will have major health benefits for all of us, giving us more resources to achieve that optimal health that we all desire.

¹ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/sickaroundtheworld/etc/script.html>

² http://huffingtonpost.com/alison-rose-levy/the-doctors-prescription_b_170846.html



Gordon Interview (Continued)

So there are four things: wisdom balancing knowledge, a community of healers, self-care as the heart of all healthcare, and healthcare as a right to which everyone is entitled. If we have these, then the whole health system changes, and all of us – our health and the way we look at the world – will change and improve.

Finally, if I were to add one more change, it would be to rid ourselves of the malpractice system. We need to create a system in which physicians and other healthcare professionals who do something inappropriate or damaging are re-educated or, if they keep doing it, punished and removed from medicine. If patients are harmed, they should be compensated. There needs to be a complete separation between the doctors' re-education or punishment and financial recompense. This is, more or less, the system that is used in Norway and New Zealand.

If we do all these things, healthcare will be available to everyone, and costs will be reduced dramatically. The emphasis will be on self-care and mutual help, on education and prevention. All the money that now goes to insurance companies will be saved. And, if we stop this malpractice madness, much of the fear that's in medicine, the defensiveness that deforms practice, will be eliminated.



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