Session Four

*Primum Non Nocere*

First Do No Harm
...I do not approve of anything forced and violent...The gentlest application is the best...and if I can obtain my purpose with one application only, I ought not make use of a second one. We must help...the diseased or weakened organism gently, not rigidly and impetuously; we must, as it were, lead the sick body softly and gently by the hand, sometimes assist and support it more firmly, but not urge it too much, not drag and push it; we must not insist absolutely upon obtaining a certain thing by our remedies, but only co-operate with the body in accomplishing its work, and then give up this gentle, and gentlest co-operation, as soon as ever the body is able to help itself proceed alone.

~Father Sebastian Kneipp, *My Water Cure*
Session Overview

- Define the principle *Primum Non Nocere*
- Hippocratic history
- Suppression, palliation, elimination
Primum Non Nocere
Definition

Naturopathic physicians follow three precepts to avoid harming the patient:

1. Naturopathic physicians utilise methods and medicinal substances that minimise the risk of harmful effects, and apply the least possible force or intervention necessary to diagnose illness and restore health

(Zeff & Snider, AANP, 1989)
Methods That Minimise Harm

- The level of health intervention should be appropriate to the patient’s needs at the time
- Naturopaths are guided by the concept of the Therapeutic Order when determining the appropriate level of intervention for the treatment plan
Substances That Minimise Harm

- The use of natural remedies/therapies that are as close as possible to their natural, whole state are far less likely to cause adverse reactions or side-effects
Primum Non Nocere
Definition

2. Naturopathic physicians respect and work with the *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* in diagnosis, treatment and counseling, for if this self-healing process is not respected the patient may be harmed

(Zeff & Snider, AANP, 1989)
Work with the Vis

- Consideration must be given to:
  - Diagnostic methods
  - Treatments
  - Counselling or advice

- Harm may occur:
  - Physically
  - Emotionally
  - Psychologically
  - Spiritually
3. Whenever possible the suppression of symptoms is avoided as suppression generally interferes with the healing process.

(Zeff & Snider, AANP, 1989)
The conventional treatment of acute diseases is suppressive and not curative.

~Lindlahr
Lindlahr’s Five Stages of Inflammation

- Incubation
- Aggravation
- Destruction
- Abatement
- Resolution and reconstruction

(Lindlahr, 2010)
Incubation

○ Is the period of time where the conditions for an inflammatory reaction are developing (morbid matter, toxins, poor nutrition, abnormal cellular function/structure, micro-organisms)

○ Incubation is coexistent with the 3 primary manifestations of disease:
  1. Lowered Vitality/VF
  2. Abnormal composition of blood & lymph
  3. Accumulation of waste material. Morbid matter, toxins

(Lindlahr, 2010)
Aggravation

- Is the body’s inflammatory processes initiated (via VMN) to rectify the imbalanced situation; body responds to the challenge of a health threatening scenario; signs & symptoms of inflammation (swelling, redness, temperature/fever, discomfort) increase

  (Lindlahr, 2010)
Destruction

- The inflammatory processes which causes damage to micro-organisms, morbid matter, cellular tissue; accumulation of exudates, breakdown products of inflammation, puss formation, sore, boil, abscess etc.

- As long as the inflammatory phase is acute (managed effectively & not suppressed) the destruction of healthy tissue will generally be very minimal & the tissues will be restored

(Lindlahr, 2010)
Abatement & Absorption

- If the acute healing reaction is supported (not suppressed) the inflammatory response will correct the acute imbalance
  1. Support Vital Force, optimise nutrition, enhance elimination
  2. Appropriate nutrition, fluids, rest, hydrotherapy to support VMN
  3. Inflammatory response will abate (reduction in swelling, discomfort, redness, temperature), usually some discharge occurs

(Lindlahr, 2010)
Reconstruction

- Once inflammatory processes have declined, VF can be focused on the role of restoration of damaged tissue and optimisation of tissue/organ function

- Appropriate nutrition, modification of lifestyle habits to address disturbing factors – to prevent recurrence of the healing reaction.

  (Lindlahr, 2010)
Suppression

- To prevent the development, action, or expression of

- To prevent or inhibit a process or reaction

(Lindlahr, 2010)
The more acute conditions are suppressed, the greater will be the incidence of chronic diseases.

(Lindlahr, 1922)
How Diseases Have Changed Over Time

The ‘Epidemiological Transition’
(‘The sweet spot’)
mid 20th Century

Economic growth

All diseases
Acute diseases
Chronic Diseases
YLD (years of life with a disability)
Total Deaths
Infectious Disease Deaths

Adapted from (Egger et. al., 2017)
What About Palliation?

- Definition: To make a disease or its symptoms less severe or unpleasant without removing the cause

(Oxford Dictionary, 2018)
Palliation Verses Cure

- Both can appear similarly at times—symptoms will decrease
- Attention to the state of any discharge is one key to knowing which is happening
- Knowing the potential actions of your therapies is also key
The most important requirement of the art of healing is that no mistake or neglect occur.

~ Ch’i Po
Iatrogenic Illness

- Refers to any effect on a person, resulting from any activity of a healthcare professional or the promoting products or services as beneficial to health, that does not support a goal of the person affected

(The Free Dictionary, 2018; Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2018)
Iatrogenic Illness

- There were 7,820 deaths from complications of medical and surgical care in Australia in 2002. This was 5.8% of all Australian deaths in 2002 (AIHW National Morbidity Database, Australia’s Health 2004, AIHW)

- There were 68,913 hospitalisations in Australia in 2001-2002 for complications of medical and surgical care (Australian Hospital Data, AIHW, Australia, 2001-02)
Iatrogenic Illness

Healthcare is a risky business. Simply being a patient in an acute care hospital in Australia carries, on average, a 40-fold greater risk of dying from the care process than from being in traffic, and a 400-fold greater risk than working in the chemical industry.

Iatrogenic injury is costly; at least 10% of admissions to acute-care hospitals in Australia are associated with a potentially preventable adverse event. It has been estimated that the direct medical costs of these events exceeds $2 billion per year.

(Runciman & Moller, 2001)
Iatrogenic Illness

- What about iatrogenesis from natural therapists?

- How might examinations or treatments provided by natural health care practitioners lead to illness, disease or death?
As to diseases, make a habit of two things: to help; or at least to do no harm.

Nature never needs instruction; don’t do too much.

To do nothing is also a good remedy.

~ Hippocrates
Restorative Practices

- Sleeping, resting and playing
- Breathing deeply
- Eating nutritive, whole foods
- Drinking plentiful, clean water
- Fresh air, sunshine, and time spent in nature
- Connecting with our higher power
Ending Quote for the Day

*It's supposed to be a secret, but I'll tell you anyway. We doctors do nothing. We only help and encourage the doctor within.*”

~*Albert Schweitzer, M.D.*
References


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