SOCH111 – History of Healing

Session 19
History of Naturopathic Medicine
Department of Social Sciences
Session Aims

- To trace the roots of naturopathy to historical precedents studied this semester
- To examine the development of naturopathy as a whole medical system and philosophy in the US and parallel developments in Australia
- To discuss the major contributors to naturopathic thought and practice in the early profession
Historical Threads

- Herbalism
- Diet
- Hygiene/natural elements
- Hydrotherapy
- Homeopathy
- Physical/manual therapies
- Mental/moral discipline

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Hydrotherapy

- Development focused in Germany/Austria
- “Water Cure”, later termed “hydropathy” and then “hydrotherapy”
- JH Rause (1805 – 1848): The Water Cure Applied to Every Known Disease
- Johann Schroth (1798 – 1856): added dry fasting and sweat baths to water treatment

Father Sebastian Kneipp

- 1821 – 1897
- Became a Catholic priest in 1852
- Began treating parishioners with water and herbal therapies with great success
- Rose to international prominence for the effectiveness of treatments
- *My Water Cure*
- Grandfather of Naturopathy

Benedict Lust

- 1872 - 1945
- Born in Germany, contracted TB in his youth
- Father Kneipp cured his TB with water treatments and herbs
- In 1892, Kneipp commissioned Lust to introduce the Kneipp Water Cure to the US
- Lust is considered the Father of Naturopathy, though may other influenced the development of the profession

Hydrotherapy in the US

- Introduced in 1843 in NY
- Quickly spread across the country
- Many American “water-curists” were “regular” medical doctors
- Theories and methods became more sophisticated
- Not for relaxation, not frivolous in nature

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Hygiene & Hydrotherapy in the US

- Sylvester Graham (1794 – 1851): Grahamite Health Reform Movement
- Russell Thatcher Trall (1812 – 1877): Hygeiotherapy
- John Harvey Kellogg (1852 – 1943): *Rational Hydrotherapy*, Battle Creek Sanitorium

Other Major Influences

- **Arnold Rikli** (1823-1926): Swiss, pioneered naturism
- **Louis Kuhne** (1834-1907): German, focused on elimination of toxins
- **F.E. Bilz** (1842-1922): German, *The Natural Healing Method*, a nature cure classic
- **Adolph Just** (1859-1939?): German, *Return to Nature*, founder of Yungborn
American Herbalism: Samuel Thomson

- 1769 – 1843, New England
- Self-taught botanist and herbalist
- Personal experimentation with herbs as well as spending time with local herbalist woman
- Convinced by personal experience of the medicinal virtues of herbs and the dangers of conventional medicine of the late 1700’s

Thomsonian Medicine

- Based on two premises:
  - Body has a central heater, the stomach
  - Stomach can be blocked by mucus that forms in it
- Emetic used to clear the mucus, then heat is restored by applying external heat or ingesting hot herbs

Every Man His Own Physician

- Popular medicine with a view that anyone could heal themselves using his system
- Patented his system in 1813
- Mailed remedies out across the country to anyone who ordered them
- Seen as safer than the regular medicine of the day
- Local Botanical Societies—those using his remedies would come together and discuss ideas and treatments
Physiomedicalism

- Short-lived medical ideology, between Thomsonianism and 1911
- Curing according to universal truths of Nature, Vital Force of the human organism
- Very strong following
- Skilled and medically trained practitioners

(Thurston, 1900)
The Eclectic School

- “American school of medicine”, began in early 19th century
- Drew on all schools of alternative medicine but especially herbal medicine, with a focus on Native American herbs
- “Use anything that works”

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Revision Questions

- What were three major “irregular” medical ideologies of the 19th century that fed into creation of Naturopathy as a medical system?
- What did all of the precursor systems have in common that was different to “regular” medicine?

Other food for thought:

- Why might vegetarianism have been a focus of dietary therapy in the mid-to-late 1800’s based on what we’ve learned this semester about the history of food?
Back to Benedict Lust

- Formed the medical system of Naturopathy based on European and American nature cure practices of the 1800’s
- Tireless and avid advocate of Naturopathy, speaking and writing both politically and popularly
- Sparked a very rapid rise in the profession for 40 years

http://www.ndhealthfacts.org/wiki/File:3.1_SchoolofNaturopathy.jpg
Formation of Naturopathy

- 1896: American Naturopathic Association formed
- For the first 50 years, there was no clear and concise statement of professional identity
- Naturopathy was whatever Lust and the other Nature Cure doctors said it was
- By 1940’s, several 4-year naturopathic medical schools, licensing in 1/3 of states and 4 Canadian provinces
Where Did “Naturopathy” Come From?

- Term coined by Dr John Scheel and his wife, both homeopaths, in 1895 in New York
- Greek word for “nature” is *physikos*
- Root of the word *physician*
- “Naturopath” is an Anglicization of these roots

PD-US,
What Was Early Naturopathy?

- Both a method of healing and a way of life
- Three major tenets according to Lust:
  - Elimination of evil habits
  - Corrective habits
  - New principles of living

Osteopathy & Chiropractic

- From the beginning, there was a connection between these disciplines and Naturopathy
- Present day Naturopathic training in the US incorporates elements of these disciplines
- Historically in America and presently in Europe, most Naturopaths were/are also either an Osteopath or Chiropractor
Louisa Lust, ND

- 1868 – 1925
- Matriarch of Naturopathy
- Studied nature cure in London before coming to America
- Met and married Benedict
- Naturopathic doctor specializing in treatment of women

http://www.ndhealthfacts.org/wiki/File:3.1_LouisaLust.jpg
Henry Lindlahr, MD

- 1852 – 1925
- *Nature Cure*, 1913, still the seminal text on traditional naturopathy
- Went beyond Lust in setting out a cohesive (albeit not concise) theory and philosophy of Nature Cure
Catechism of Naturopathy

Lindlahr’s presentation of a five-part therapeutic progression in naturopathic therapeutics:

1. “Return to Nature” – diet, dress, exercise, rest, and other hygienic considerations
2. Elemental remedies – water, air, light, electricity
3. Chemical remedies – herbs, homeopathy
4. Mechanical remedies – manipulations, massage
5. Mental/spiritual remedies – prayer, positive thinking, service to family and community
Nature Cure

- 20 editions, last one published 1922
- “a complete revolution in the art and science of living”
- Sets out theories on causes of disease, stages of inflammation, effects of suppressing symptoms/diseases, and the different natures of acute and chronic illnesses and their treatments
- “a system of building the entire being in harmony with the constructive principle in Nature on the physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of being”
Other Naturopathic Evolutionaries

• John H. Tilden MD  
  – Toxemia
• Elmer Lee MD  
  – The hygienic system
• Bernarr Macfadden  
  – Physical culture
• Joe Shelby Riley  
  – Zone therapy

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Vitalism in Naturopathy

According to Lindlahr:

- First primary cause of disease is lowered vitality
- First in progression of treatments is those things that restore and build vitality
- Decline in cellular vitality brought about by wrong habits of living, wrong thinking and feeling, overwork, unnatural stimulation and excesses of various kinds

Revision Questions

- Who were three major contributors to the establishment of Naturopathy and its theory of practice?
- What are some of the other philosophies and systems studied this semester that were vitalistic?

Other food for thought:

- Lindlahr stated in the early 1900’s that bacteria were a secondary, not primary, cause of illness. Given the status of germ theory at that time, what do you think of that statement?
Opposition to Naturopathy

- Flexner Report, 1910
- In 1920’s & 30’s, vigorously opposed by Regular doctors/JAMA
- Seen as quackery
- Constant campaigns against Lust, arrests of naturopaths
- Nature Cure philosophy and medical successes of NDs were dismissed
Naturopathy Recedes

- Great Depression and WWII, reduced resources
- Improved understanding of physiology and biochemistry, diagnostics
- Penicillin (1940) and other drugs seen as “miracles”
- Rise of modern nursing
- Conventional medicine reduces its harmfulness and increases its political and economic strength
- Lust dies
- Internal professional tensions and conflict
Naturopathy Recedes

- By 1957, only one naturopathic college remained in the US
- By 1979, only six US states licensed naturopaths
- By 1980, only about 175 licensed and practicing naturopathic doctors, compared to 3000 in 1951

Naturopathy Revitalises

- Society of the late 60’s – early 70’s more interested in “natural”
- Growing understanding of limits of drugs and surgery
- Growing incidence of chronic illnesses, no magic bullet
- Biopsychosocial model of Family Medicine established
- Feminism

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Naturopathy in Australia

- Mirrored initial growth, recession and revitalisation periods in America
- Drew on American and British traditions, interwoven with chiropractic and osteopathy
- Not as well defined as in the US, perhaps more eclectic
- Currently no statutory regulation/registration
Rise in Australia

- 1910’s – 1940’s
- Most naturopaths trained overseas, apprenticed or self-taught
- Claud Beale, Brisbane, in the 1910’s
- Maurice Blackmore, graduated British Naturopathic College in 1923 and emigrated to Australia
- Blackmore opened the first health food store in Australia in Brisbane in 1938
- Early colleges and associations included naturopathy, osteopathy and chiropractic
Plateau, Then Expansion

- From the 50’s to early 70’s, the profession entered a holding pattern, and from the 70’s onward, as in the US, enjoyed robust growth.

- During the holding pattern, Alf Jacka was the most prominent and widely practiced naturopath in Australia.

- From the 70’s, a number of educational institutions established to provide tertiary education in naturopathy within Australia and professional associations also proliferated.
Revision Questions

- What were three major influences on the growth, recession and regrowth of Naturopathy in America and Australia?
- What are the major differences between the development of Naturopathy as a profession in America and Australia?

Other food for thought:

- Why do you think Naturopathy has the level of popularity it has right now?
References

- Micozzi, M 2006, Fundamentals of complementary and integrative medicine, 3rd edn, Saunders Elsevier, St. Louis, MO.
- Pizzorno, J & Murray, M 2013, Textbook of natural medicine, 4th edn, Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, St. Louis, MO.
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