

Opinion: nutrition in medicine

Why is nutrition almost totally ignored in medical school training?

Posted by: T Colin Campbell | Jun 22, 2013 | 0 Comments See Whole, Rethinking the Science of Nutrition (2013), T. Colin Campbell, with Howard Jacobson During my decades-long experimental research career on diet and health issues, I raised as many...

Response by skip stein: June 30, 2013

Wow, finally someone is addressing the 'elephant in the room'. I have met and talked with Dr. Campbell on several occasions after attending his lectures. My wife Nancy has completed his nutritional training program at Cornell University. Dr. Campbell and other prominent research and practicing doctors (few and far between) have been trying to address this question for decades. Even when we have asked our own physicians, they don't seem to know or understand and some have just said that there is just too much to learn and no room for a nutritional science program!

Since FOOD IS the primary way we survive you would think doctors would be more interested in just how this marvelous chemistry works. But nope, not so much. While Dr. Campbell is a real sweetheart (and has been castigated for years) he does not want to be negative. Well sometimes the truth seems 'negative' but the facts are that most if not all medical schools receive the majority of their funding from pharmacological related corporations or persons linked/invested in/with such companies.

The business of medicine has been dominated by 'doctors' for all of history. In early times, it was the 'medicine man', a mysterious man/woman who did miracles to 'cure' disease. We know that they most often used herbs and other natural remedies discovered over eons to work (many still do!). When the 'medicine man' started to break down those herbs and natural remedies that worked they discovered the chemical reactions and components. Instead of just using them in their natural form as had been done for eons and quite effectively, they knew that they couldn't patent such proven remedies/methods so they created chemically similar compounds that they believed would be just as effective but could be patented and thus make them lots of money! Thus it began.

Now the pharmacological industry creates pill dispensers instead of old country medicine men/women who actually treat the whole patient and correct the imbalance that is symptomized by disease. Have you ever seen the 'pill book' on a doctor's desk (well now it is all computerized)? It is massive and humongous.

It is a fact that many medicines are marvelous at treating diseases, almost miraculous in fact. The invention of many early vaccines by research doctors trying to cure their patients and the antibiotics that manage many other ailments and on, and on, have been the key to developing much of Western civilization. This process refocused society on the medical community as the be all and end all for treating ailments and disease. The application of science, distracted everyone from Nature. Instead of natural remedies or those extracted from plant/animal/fungus and other naturally occurring elements found in

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Nature, the focus was on inventing and patenting drugs that were so focused on single ailments they neglected the human patient being treated as a whole.

Yes, research into drugs is very expensive and companies/institutions should receive compensation for their investments but maybe we have gone to an extreme and focused on monetary issues and forgotten about the true reason this began was to cure disease/ailments in the patient!

Now the disease is treated, not the human patient! If the pharmaceutical company can't make enough money, the drug/treatment program may never be allowed to be utilized (even though it may indeed be effective!). Too much focus on money and reward and not enough on the patient and the cure.

The medical community lost the linkage from lifestyle to disease. The human immune system, the true first defense against disease, infection and sickness was relegated to, well it was just ignored. The fact that germs and bacteria in the environment can cause infection and it is the human immune system that always took action to protect the human body seemed to be set aside. The fact that eating poor nutrition weakened the immune system and depleted nutrients in the human body seemed to be forgotten or just ignored. The fact that much disease is caused by poor nutrition and could be cured by proper nutrition was replaced by 'quick treatments' and pills. Take a pill for your vitamins. Take a pill for inflammation. Pill for this pill for that; it was easy and people began to depend on the medical community to 'fix' the damage they did to their bodies by poor lifestyle choices and lousy nutrition.

Now we see a resurgence in a more 'holistic' approach to treating disease. Not part of the traditional medical community, the ineffectiveness of the 'pill treatment' and pharmacological approach has been shown to be dysfunctional. The focus on the disease and not the patient has distracted medical practitioners and their training institutions away from whole patient care to a quick and easy fix; the pill, shot or other disease focused treatment; all the while forgetting the impact of the 'treatment' on the patient as a human being.

Just look at the side effects, so quickly recited during commercial

advertisements for drugs. Commercial advertising of drugs? How can a layman, untrained in medical practices hope to understand this commercialization of a medical treatment/drug much less request it for treatment? The complex interactions and side effects are daunting, even for someone with extensive training/education. It seem to be the proof that the medical/pharmaceutical community has a focus on profit (new drug more money) rather than cures.

Money is made by treating disease, not curing it! You cannot poison a sick person well, but many of these drugs attempt do just that! By focusing on the disease and not on the patient, the doctor and the medical industry has lost sight of the reason for the 'treatment' in the first place is to cure the entire patient.

The human body is extremely complex. The chemical, electrical and physical machine that is US is poorly understood. Yes, it's true, the human body and just how it works is still a mystery. Some components are understood and some bits of genetic sequencing have been stumbled upon but overall it is still a scientific puzzle how the many millions of cells and interactions every second in the human body make a human being function!

Yet, the medical community, leads one to believe (through slick advertisements) that they can cure a disease when in fact, they are just treating it. In so many cases the disease itself is caused by the environment and how the human patient interacts with it. This includes and should be focused on the daily doses of 'stuff' one puts in the human body. Yes, FOOD! Nutrition is and always will be the primary sustenance of the human being and until the complex chemical interactions are truly understood, there is no pill or drug that will substitute for food. The type of food is the key and this is the realm of nutrition, but not medicine for the most part.

The divergence away from natural remedies and healthy food are linked to the chemical/pharmacological industries. We create 'fast food' and try to product food at a higher profit. This leads to a focus on selling more food, not necessarily good nutrition. Food has been separated from nutrition, much as medicine has been separated from the curative procedures/treatments of the shaman. Eating nutritious food boosts the natural immune system. Eating junk food, chemically laden or unnatural food contributes to disease.

I don't believe this has been a malicious journey, this focus on quick treatment and 'pill medicine' but is has been driven by corporations seeking to make a profit and is not medically sound. The monetization of medicine and the treatment of human disease used to be the realm of healers. Now it is owned by insurance companies and pharmacological corporations (as well as the Federal government who in turn controls these industries).

Medical practitioners are not trained on how to make a sick person well any longer. They are trained to treat a disease and only the disease and have lost sight of the more holistic approach of healing the patient. Doctors cannot just treat the disease you must treat the human being because if you treat the human being and work to make him/her healthier, the disease will also be addressed and cured. This is the reason nutrition is almost totally ignored in medical school training programs.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.