Energy medicine includes a number of different therapies such as acupuncture that correct imbalances or blockages of the body's bioenergy, which contribute to disease.

**What is Energy Medicine?**

Energy medicine is a form of alternative medicine that offers a wide range of benefits for patients with autoimmune diseases. Used alone or as a complementary or adjunctive therapy with conventional medicine, energy medicine can relieve symptoms and help induce remission. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has deemed energy medicine a form of "frontier medicine" for which it warded the University of Arizona in Tucson and the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington grants of $1.8 million dollars to establish research centers.

**The Human Energy Field**

Energy medicine includes a number of different disciplines that target the body's energy field, including therapeutic touch therapy, magnetic field therapy, meditation, spiritual healing, movement therapies, Ayurveda, Johrei, watsu, intercessory prayer, polarity therapy, breema bodywork, shiatsu, amma, lomilomi, Chi Nei Tsang, Jin Shin Do, shen massage therapy, qigong, t'ai chi chuan, aikido, yoga, quantum healing, acupuncture, acupressure, homeopathy, bright light therapy and Reiki therapy.

Techniques designed to manipulate energy in the body are based on ancient healing arts and stem from the Eastern belief that all humans have a life-force energy known as qi or chi by the Chinese, ki by the Japanese, and prana by Hindus. In other disciplines this energy is known as orgone, mana, ether, odyle, and élan vital.

**Eastern Medical Traditions**

According to the Eastern disciplines, disease occurs when energy is out of balance or blocked, and healing is enhanced when the imbalance or blockage is corrected. In the West, in the 5th Century B.C. Hippocrates recognized the body's natural capacity for healing and instructed physicians to find the blocking influences both within a patient and between the patient and his environment. Nature, Hippocrates wrote, is the source of healing.
In ancient times, this vital energy force was identified with breath, which the Hebrews called ruach, the Greeks called psyche or pneuma, and the Romans called spiritus. Today, this vital force is commonly called bioenergy. In ancient times, Eastern medicine identified meridians through which this bioenergy rhythmically flows through the body. Blockages or imbalances in these meridians are corrected through manipulations designed by the various energy medicine disciplines.

Diagnostic Concerns

Although energy medicine is used to both assess the body's bioenergy and treat imbalances, critics of energy medicine caution against using alternative medicine alone to diagnose medical conditions. While energy medicine is useful in diagnosing the underlying causes or factors that contribute to specific diseases, conventional medical techniques are essential for diagnosing specific conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or systemic lupus erythematosus.

Energy Medicine first approaches a health condition by strengthening the person's overall energy system regardless of the specific condition or diagnosis. It then focuses on working with specific energies that are involved in or contributing to the problem.

Benefits

In a 1990 review of more than 131 controlled scientific studies of healing worldwide, Dr. Daniel Benor found evidence of healing for a wide range of human conditions. These include changes in immune system functioning as well as improvement of skin wound healing, blood pressure, vision, anxiety, pain, heart disease, pulmonary function, and relationships.

Resources:

Katy Koontz, Energy medicine goes mainstream: techniques to balance your energy are among the most widely used disciplines in alternative medicine, Natural Health, October 2003.


Resource for finding a qualified energy practitioner are available at www.innersource.net/links_practioners.htm

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