

Integrative Medicine

Dr. Mosquera

Integrative Medicine, an intelligent combination of western and evidence-based alternative therapies which focuses on therapeutic relationships, health, and healing, is transforming the future of health care. Its evolution in our new century is the ideal approach to collectively address and formulate therapeutic strategies on the many issues specific to health care, especially in the areas of prevention and health promotion. In response to the deeply troublesome and uncompassionate chaos in our fractured health care system, Integrative Medicine is emerging as a sustainable and attractive model of relationship-centered health care, focusing on prevention and health promoting lifestyle choices, which foster healing and wellness. Using evidence-based scientific methods and research, Integrative Medicine is a health care model driven by inquiry and open to new paradigms, combining conventional therapies with complementary and alternative therapies while seeking natural and safer health solutions to each patient. It is a “high touch-low cost” individualized patient-centered care that empowers patients to actively participate in their health and healing. This is accomplished by developing an understanding of all factors that influence health, wellness, and disease, including mind, body, spirit, and community. Studies demonstrating high patient demand and satisfaction are now appearing in many hospital centers of Integrative Health Care and medical schools throughout this country.

Conventional and alternative therapeutic modalities like MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) are presented in relationship to the whole person and comprehensively examined for their risks, benefits, and science. Some Integrative therapies such as Acupuncture, Hypnotherapy, and Osteopathic manipulation are very skill specific, which makes them difficult to replicate in the Western Science models mostly used for drug trials (i.e. randomized, blinded and placebo controlled). In these as well as other effective integrative therapies, a “sliding or hierarchy scale of evidence” is an additional method to consider the benefits and risks of therapies. In this evidence-based evaluation standard, the greater the potential of a treatment to cause harm, the stricter the standards of evidence it should be held to.

Examples of a greater potential for harm would be the banned pain medication Vioxx, a non-steroidal osteoarthritis medication and pain killer, which was removed from the marketplace only after years of being implicated in thousands of deaths, heart attacks, and discovery of major flaws in the approval process by the FDA. The approved use of stem cell transplants for breast cancer patients in the early 1990s was another scientifically scrutinized therapy, which turned out to provide disastrous and deadly

results. Clearly these therapies carried extremely high risk to patients when compared to massage, meditation, or acupuncture. Multiple studies have also recognized the vast and dangerous overuse of medications like antibiotics, where millions of prescriptions are written annually to treat self-limiting viral illnesses and ended up creating drug reactions and “super bugs” instead of cures. Adverse drug reactions or ADRs in US hospitals top over 2 million patients annually while the over prescribing and abuse of pain killers, antidepressants, and antibiotics are leading causes of both morbidity and mortality throughout the US. Prescription drug abuse has become a leading cause of mortality throughout the US in young men (ages 15-40). Tranquilizers, anti-depressants, and especially opiate pain killer abuse has reached epidemic proportions, being reported in staggering numbers by state health officials and emergency rooms. Clearly, a new strategy is desperately needed to change the direction of these health outcomes. The Integrative Health approach is designed to maximize safe and effective care while also promoting our body’s natural ability of self healing and reducing risk. Empowering patients with this knowledge and wisdom is an important step toward regaining your trust and confidence in this most noble profession we serve.

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Useful sites to learn more about Integrative Medicine:

NCCAM.ORG

Bravewell.org

AZCIM.COM

OSHER.HMS.HARVARD.EDU

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