

Personalized Lifestyle Medicine Institute Thought Leaders Consortium

Joseph Pizzorno, ND, Editor in Chief



I'll admit right up front that I am a Jeff Bland, PhD, groupie. It all started in 1976 when I had the privilege of joining Jeff's monthly study club where he would bring in a stack of a dozen papers and we'd spend hours on a Wednesday evening studying nutritional biochemistry. I learned a lot, as did the other clinicians. When I started Bastyr University (then the John Bastyr College of Naturopathic Medicine) in 1978, he was the first person I asked to join the Board of Trustees. Between attending many of his lectures and listening to Functional Medicine Update (now Synthesis) I have learned so much from Jeff. So when he invited me to his Thought Leaders Consortium in Cedarbrook, Washington, to help plan a strategy for his newly formed Personalized Lifestyle Medicine Institute (PLMI), I was honored to accept. Turns out it was a most fascinating weekend, which I think *IMCJ* readers will find of interest. Once again, Jeff is creating something special with tremendous potential to influence health policy. Please visit www.plminstitute.org for more information.

Thought Leader Perspectives

Over 50 attended the weekend consortium with 26 of us making 10-minute presentations. Following are the key points I took from each with some commentary (in the order of presentation). Basically, the presentations ranged from highlighting the crippling problems in the health care system to visioning for truly curative solutions.

Health Media and Health Consumer Presentations

Patricia Fitzgerald, DAOM, DHM, LAc, CCN, *The Huffington Post*. Patricia started the conversation with an intriguing presentation on how the Internet and social media are fundamentally changing how patients access health information. Of particular importance is how much people are using crowd sourcing to make health care decisions. I am reminded of this everyday, as my wife, Lara—with the publication of her book *Your Bones*—has developed a following on the National Osteoporosis Forum that consults her for health care advice.

Alice Bast, National Foundation for Celiac Awareness. Motivated consumer activists can be such a powerful force for change—as well-demonstrated by Alice.

I was quite surprised to see her data showing that patients with celiac disease have the second highest overall disease burden. This reminded me of my clinical experience where I found that over 50% of my patients with chronic disease improved dramatically simply by removing wheat from their diet.

Audra Davies, Nutrilite. We are all painfully aware of how difficult it is for patients to lose weight, much less keep it off after a year. Therefore Audra's presentation on the use of genomics explained how to differentiate which type of diet people best responded to. Of particular importance was her hard data from a clinical team performed where they assigned patients to one of four diets (Atkins, Zone, Learn, and Ornish) either randomly or according to genomics. After 12 months those assigned according to genomics lost 5.3 kg more. Look for an interview in *IMCJ* in the near future—as we all know, personalization is critical for the care we provide.

Marc Brush, *Nutrition Business Journal (NBJ)*. Marc showed us his personal genomic profile and how he, as a consumer, struggled to make sense of the assessment and the recommendations. Especially problematic is when the genomic results don't appear to match the consumer's experience or their family history. (For those not aware of *NBJ*—it is a great resource on the business of natural health products.)

Fred Linder and Len Monheit, *New Hope*. Fred and Len's back-and-forth presentation was both surprising (I had expected them to talk more about publishing) and engaging. They coined for us the term *shameification* as a new motivator for behavioral change that has been engendered by social media. As we all know, changing lifestyle and diet is so difficult for our patients (and ourselves!) so new tools are quite welcome.

Roger Colman, *Altacor*. Roger's presentation on new drug discovery and marketing was insightful into the reality of how the world of conventional medicine evolves. This was quite a contrast with the rest of the presentations and a good reminder that we need the best of both worlds, not just one or the other.

Trade and Professional Organizations Presentations

Loren Israelsen, United Natural Products. Loren was one of the architects of the 1994 DSHEA legislation, which provides the legal protection for consumer access to natural health products. His presentation was a surprise as I expected him to discuss the many challenging legal and regulatory issues facing integrative medicine. Instead he used his own experience with a severe health problem, comparing the cost of care in France versus the United States, to highlight one of the many serious problems facing health care today: out-of-control costs. Basically, his care would have cost a stunning 50 times more in the United States. While some of this is explainable by tax-dollar subsidy of health care in France, most of it was due to the unsustainable, excessive, and unjustifiable escalation in hospital care costs.

Mark Blumenthal, American Botanical Council. Mark is a long-term teacher and advocate for botanical medicine. He made a compelling case for the clinical efficacy of botanicals and how their low cost is part of the solution to the health care crisis.

Mike Stroka, JD, MBA, MS, CNS, and Corinne Bush, MS, CNS, Certification Board for Nutritional Specialists. Mike and Corinne made the case for credentialing of nutritionists independently of the ADA (now the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics). As eating a poor diet is the primary cause of most disease, I strongly support efforts that make good quality nutrition counseling more accessible.

David Jones, MD, Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM). As one of the founders of IFM, David has many years of actively working to provide real solutions to the health care crisis by training health care professionals to practice curative rather than symptomatic care. Rather than talk about IFM, David instead showed a before and after video of a child with autism cured by functional medicine. There was not a dry eye in the house. Here was a child, whose mother was told he would need to be institutionalized, now functioning totally normally due to correction of his methylation defect recognized through the wisdom and insight of Michael Stone, MD, MS (nutrition). Curative medicine is the solution to the health care crisis. Well, let me state this a bit differently: living healthfully is the primary solution combined with doctors who think curatively.

Woodson Merrell, MD, Beth Israel Integrative Medicine Clinic. Woody is also a long-term functional medicine doctor. He presented the challenges of integrative medicine education and clinical practice within a conventional medicine institution. It certainly helps to have a major donor! But more importantly, he showed how integrative medicine clinics can be made to pay their own way.

Clinician Presentations

Bill Baer, MD, Clinxus and Van Andel Institute. Bill presented on “Pharmacogenetics: The Future of Medicine?” This is such an important topic as so much of conventional medical treatment failure and adverse events is due to genetic variations in how patients respond to and detoxify prescribed drugs. As Bill noted, the fourth leading cause of death in the United States is *properly* prescribed drugs. During the break in conversation with him I predicted that in 10 years prescribing a drug to a patient without knowing their genomics may become malpractice. He concurred.

Mark Hyman, MD, UltraWellness Center. Mark has become very effective in communicating the principles and practice of functional medicine to not only the health care consumers and professionals but also to governmental agencies. He presented his excellent lecture on the fiscal and health care costs of diabetes.

Joel Robertson, PharmD, Robertson Health Institute. I love the title of Joel’s presentation, “One Size Fits One.” His basic theme is that basically everything starts with a properly functioning brain. His team has developed, over the past 20 years, physiological assessments which have been used with more than 14 500 patients in research outcome studies around the world. This personalization of brain function optimization is quite intriguing.

Graham Reedy, MD, Auburn Sports Activity Center. Graham is another thought leader in functional medicine. He presented an intriguing case history of a patient, showing with serial laboratory tests how the combination of lifestyle, conventional drugs, and natural medicines dramatically improves health and decreases disease risk.

Scott Rigden, MD, Scottsdale Clinic. A theme seems to be developing that I strongly welcome: highly successful clinicians working to understand exactly how they think about and understand patients. The immense value of this is that they can now not only achieve better results with their diverse patients but they can now teach others to be effective as well.

Coco Newton, MPH, RD, CCN, Clinical Nutrition. Coco, through the stories of two patients with ALS, Craig Oster, PhD, and former NFL player, Steve Smith, presented on the growing importance of social networks as part of the health care system. Her description of Dr Craig’s story and his use of real food to improve his health was quite compelling.

Michael Stone, MD, MS, Ashland Functional Medicine. Michael presented the biochemistry and his insightful thinking that resulted in the cure of the autistic child Dr David Jones presented above. Michael showed how he used the functional medicine timeline to deduce when and how the biochemical defect occurred that transformed a healthy child into an autistic child. Seeing how he made his brilliant insight was extremely educational.

James Ho, MD, Functional Medicine Laboratory, China. James discussed with us the thinking he is doing to

compare and contrast the principles of traditional Chinese medicine with those of functional medicine. I think this a worthy endeavor and I look forward to seeing his finished work.

Research/Academia Presentations

Dale Bredesen, MD, Buck Institute. Dale is the founding president of the Buck Institute, which is devoted to brain health research. He presented on emerging research on the underlying causes of dementia and, once again, the importance of personalization of care.

Mark Houston, MD, MS, ABAAM, FACP, FAHA, FASH, FACN, FAARM, Hypertension Institute. Every time I hear Mark present I am in awe. If you have not heard him lecture on endothelial dysfunction as the underlying cause of virtually all cardiovascular disease, please don't wait any longer. He has now identified 400 factors to consider in diagnosis and intervention.

Roger Newton, PhD, FAHA, Esperion Therapeutics. Roger presented two novel drugs he has been working on. It was quite an interesting insight into drug discovery and marketing. The contrast between the drug/disease and integrative/natural/functional models is quite illuminating. Yes, we need both.

Joseph Pizzorno, ND, Bastyr University, IMCJ, Bioclinic Naturals, and SaluGenecists. I focused on the need to develop an academic infrastructure before any long-term change would happen in the established institutions. I presented my new *Clinical Pathophysiology: A Functional Perspective* (see my editorial in *IMCJ* 12.1) as an example of the textbooks we need to write.

Martha Herbert, MD, PhD, Harvard Neurology. Martha presented her remarkable research on autism. I especially appreciated her concepts of the signal-to-noise ratio and brain efficiency being such critical issues to children suffering this dreadful malady. Once again, personalization of care is critical.

John Troup, PhD, Metagenics. As Metagenics is the initial funder of PLMI, we were all quite intrigued to hear their vision. I very much appreciated John's ability to step beyond proprietary commercial interests and instead focus on the bigger issue of advancing the field. Commendations on their vision.

Jeff Bland, PhD, and Deanna Minich, PhD, PLMI. Throughout the presentations Jeff (mostly of course!) and Deanna added insightful questions and comments. Between sessions, they led discussion groups to further elicit key themes.

At the end of the weekend I was inspired and hopeful. Hearing the stories of such impactful leaders was a very positive experience and I realized that together we are quite a force for *real* health care reform.

In This Issue

We are beginning what I hope will be a regular feature in *IMCJ*: interviewing a keynote speaker from an upcom-

ing conference. Our intent is to highlight speakers who we think will be presenting on topics of special significance for even more complex health problems we are seeing. Those who have been reading *IMCJ* for awhile will know that I have written several editorials on the growing problem of environmental toxicity. Therefore I am very much looking forward to hearing Edward J. Calabrese, PhD, present on the topic of "Hormesis: Its Biomedical Foundations and Therapeutic Implications" at the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians 2013 Conference in Keystone, Colorado, July 10-13, 2013. He is a professor of toxicology at the University of Massachusetts, School of Public Health and Health Sciences, in Amherst. Dr Calabrese has researched extensively in the area of host factors affecting susceptibility to pollutants. This issue of susceptibility is critically important as simple measures of toxic load do not correlate well with clinically significant reactions at the lower dosage ranges.

As I mentioned in my last editorial, we are receiving more and higher quality original research submissions. As ever, we will publish those that are both scientifically valid and clinically relevant. Yeidyly Vergne, DrPHc; Jaime Matta, PhD; Luisa Morales, DrPHc; Wanda Vargas, RN; Carolina Alvarez-Garriga, DrPH; and Manuel Bayona, PhD, provide us research to support a belief I think we all have that taking vitamins is good for our patients. These researchers show us the potential benefits of multivitamins in promoting DNA repair and preventing breast cancer.

When I saw a few months ago we had a submission from Mark C. Houston, MD, MS, FACP, FAHA, FASH, FACN, FAARM, I was so excited as, noted above, Mark is one of my heroes. He and William S. Sparks, BS, CFS, CN, provide us a double-blind, placebo controlled study showing that nutraceutical supplements lower blood pressure in hypertensive individuals. (By the way, when submissions are sent to our peer-review teams, all information which might identify an author is removed to ensure every article receives unbiased assessment.)

The study by Paul D. Rosen, MD, MA; George P. Liakeas, MD; Ebrahim Sadigim, MD; and Adam M. Bied, MD, PGY1, is a bit controversial as it was not sponsored by the manufacturer of the product and we do not have independent validation of the potency and purity of the product. However, as it is being used in the marketplace and we have hard data, I thought publication to be important and our knowledge of the physiological effects of feverfew is consistent with the reported clinical results. I hope you will find this pilot study on the short-term use of *Tanacetum parthenium* for treatment of osteoarthritis as interesting as I did.

Our interview this month is with Stephen Genuis, MD. I first learned of his clinical and research work on detoxification last year at the annual conference of the Canadian naturopathic doctors. I have been a fan ever since. We had the opportunity for an hour-long lunch in Edmonton last November—and we did not notice the time

until 2.5 hours later! If you ever have the opportunity to hear him lecture—take it.

John Weeks' Integrator Blog continues to be a must-read for everyone wanting to be kept abreast of the politics and economics of the dynamic field of integrative medicine. Congratulations to Tai Sophia for their accreditation as Maryland University of Integrative Health. I think maturation of the natural medicine institutions to fully accredited university status an extremely important foundation for eventual inclusion as an integral part of the health care system. Congratulations also to American College for the Advancement of Medicine (ACAM) for their acceptance of naturopathic physicians as full voting members—it is so encouraging to see collaboration and collegiality emerging.

As usual, trust associate editor Bill Benda, MD, to keep us in balance. Here I have waxed enthusiastically about the importance of research only to have Bill shoot down integrative medicine research as full of holes! (By the way, I always save reading Bill's column until after I have written my editorial and overview of the issue. I treasure his candid commentary.)



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