

MIND-BODY-SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTH INTERACTIONS

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Abstract:

Mind/body and spirituality in health and healing include a variety of approaches, treatments and findings. Harvard and Duke Universities, among others, have provided academic settings for encouraging and exciting forums for discussion of these topics. Presentations of research findings include such areas as body/mind and spirituality in healing, religious influences and their effect on immune and cardiovascular systems, the importance of thoughts, and other subjects dealing with health and well being. This research supports the use of many methodologies, including support groups, imaging, relaxation training and meditation. The Rosicrucian Order and its mystical teachings encompass the ideas and principles now being investigated.

Effets sur la Santé des Interactions Corps-Ésprit-Spiritualité

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Sommaire:

Les thèmes du corps/esprit et de la spiritualité dans les domaines de la santé et des soins incluent un grand nombre d'approches, de traitements et de trouvailles. Les Universités de Harvard et Duke, entre autres, ont été le cadre de forums de discussions encourageantes et intéressantes. Des résultats ont été présentés sur des sujets tels que corps/esprit et spiritualité dans les soins de santé ; l'influence de la religion et ses effets sur les systèmes immunitaire et cardio-vasculaire; l'importance de la pensée, ainsi que d'autres sujets ayant rapport à la santé et au bien-être. Cette recherche encourage l'utilisation de méthodes variées y inclus : groupes de support, imagination visuelle, apprentissage de la relaxation ainsi que de la méditation. L'Ordre Rosicrucien AMORC au travers de ses enseignements mystiques est porteur des idées et des principes qui font maintenant l'objet de ces recherches.

La Mente-El Cuerpo-La Espiritualidad y las Interacciones con la Salud

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Resumen:

Con respecto a la salud y a la curación, la relación entre la mente, el cuerpo y la espiritualidad, incluye varias maneras de encararla, métodos de tratamientos y de descubrimientos. Las Universidades de Harvard y Duke, entre otras, han provisto ambientes académicos que respaldan interesantes y estimulantes foros para la discusión de estos tópicos. Las presentaciones de los resultados de los estudios incluyen áreas tales como las de la relación entre el cuerpo, la mente y la espiritualidad; las influencias religiosas y sus efectos sobre los sistemas inmunes y cardiovasculares; la importancia de los pensamientos, y otras materias relacionadas con la salud y el bienestar. Este estudio respalda el uso de muchos métodos, incluyendo grupos de apoyo, la creación mental de imágenes, el entrenamiento para la relajación y la meditación. La Orden Rosacruz y sus enseñanzas místicas abarcan las ideas y principios ahora siendo investigados.

Mente-Corpo-Espiritualidade e Interações da Saúde

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Sumário:

Mente/Corpo e espiritualidade na saúde e cura incluem uma variedade de aproximações, tratamentos e descobrimentos. As Universidades Harvard e Duke, entre outras, tem providenciado cenários acadêmicos para encorajar e incentivar painéis para a discussão destes tópicos. As apresentações dos resultados das pesquisas incluem áreas como corpo/mente e espiritualidade em curas; as influências religiosas e seus efeitos nos sistemas imunológico e cardiovascular; a importância de pensamentos; e outros assuntos que tratam da saúde e do bem estar. Esta pesquisa apoia o uso de muitas metodologias, incluindo grupos de apoio, imageamento, treinamento de relaxamento e meditação. A Ordem Rosacruz e seus ensinamentos místicos abrangem as idéias e os princípios que estão sendo investigados ultimamente.

Geist-Koerper-Spiritualitaet und Interaktion mit der Gesundheit

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Uebersicht:

Geist/Koerper und Spiritualitaet in Gesundheit und Heilkunde schliessen eine Vielfalt von Methoden, Behandlungen und Erkenntnisse ein. Universitaeten wie Harvard und Duke, unter Anderen, bieten die akademischen Voraussetzungen die bei obrigen Themen fuer Anregung und Ermutigung sorgen. Forschungsergebnisse in Gebieten wie Koerper/Geist und Spiritualitaet in der Heilkunde, Einflusss von Religion und ihrer Wirkung auf das Immunsystem, sowie Herz und Blutkreislauf, die Bedeutung des Gedanklichen sowie anderen Themen der Gesundheit und des Wohlbefindens sind weitgehend in Referaten und Schriften behandelt. Diese Forschung befuerwortet die Anwendung einer Vielfalt von Methoden, einschliesslich Hilfsgruppen, Entspannungsuebungen und Meditation. Die gegenwaertig behandelten Begriffe und Prinzipien sind traditionell in den mystischen Lehren der Rosenkreuzer verwurzelt.

MIND-BODY-SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTH INTERACTIONS

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Introduction

The earliest studies of mankind inform us that from prehistoric times, spirituality and medicine were intertwined; that is, the early healers were priests or religious figures as well. They were believed to know the laws of the spirit world and had power in that world. It was further believed that diseases originated in this spirit world. The advances in science and technology drew civilization away from an ancient perspective, away from a belief that anything other than material causes was responsible for health or illnesses.

Today, an evolution of consciousness is taking place in the mind of scientific researchers in medicine, spirituality and the health sciences. This evolution is also apparent, to a degree, in the general society and has been so for the last fifteen to twenty years, if not longer. The results of this scientific progress are not as evident in the vast majority of society or with the majority of

health care professionals. Research has dealt mainly with the role of the mind/body/health and spirituality in medicine. Many researchers are demonstrating the relationships (i.e., effectiveness of thought, thought transference, visualization, prayer and meditation) upon the biological, physiological, emotional and sociological nature of human beings.

Scientists have found that the health of people is affected by these and other non-visible and subtle energies. Researchers in the scientific and academic communities are probing the questions of whether or not there is a true separation between body and mind or between science and spirituality in health and the healing process. The unity of mind, body and spirituality is being recognized by some and continues as an active area of observation and investigation by others.

Some students of mysticism, for example, some Rosicrucians, react in one or two ways to presentations of scientific research that seem to agree with their own mystical teachings. Either expressing the perspective that “scientists believe that they have discovered something new. The Rosicrucians have known this for centuries.” Another reaction might be “It is well that these scientific findings are confirming Rosicrucian teachings. Undoubtedly, the teachings are eternally true and everlasting. We are grateful that our brothers and sisters of science are searching and researching these great truths. We welcome them to continue and will inwardly support their efforts. Humanity is truly evolving in consciousness. Soon our understanding will be one.”

Dr. Herbert Benson, Director of Harvard University’s Mind/Body Institute welcomed participants to one of the Institute’s courses with the following statement:

... For more than 25 years laboratories at the Harvard Medical School have systematically studied the benefits of mind/body interactions. The research established that when a person engages in a repetitive prayer, word, sound, or phrase and when intrusive thoughts are passively disregarded, a specific set of physiologic changes ensue. There is decreased metabolism, heart rate, and rate of breathing and distinctive slower brain waves. These changes are the opposite of those induced by stress and have been labeled the relaxation response. Elicitation of the relaxation response has been demonstrated to be an effective therapy in a number of diseases that include hypertension, cardiac rhythm irregularities, many forms of chronic pain, insomnia, infertility, the symptoms of cancer and AIDS, premenstrual syndrome, anxiety and mild and moderate depression.

In fact, to the extent that any disease is caused or made worse by stress to that extent evoking the relaxation response is an effective therapy. This work at Harvard, led to consideration of the healing effects of spirituality, since research later established that people experienced increased spirituality as a result of eliciting the relaxation response regardless of whether or not they used religious repetitive focus. Spirituality was expressed as experiencing the presence of a power, a force, (*a universal intelligence*), an energy or what was perceived of as God and this presence was close to the person.¹

Varieties of Scientific Approaches to Research

In the practice of clinical comprehensive health care, an individual's psychosocial characteristics and behavior patterns are generally accepted as important factors in the occurrence, treatment and outcome of the vast array of major health problems confronting our society. For some scientists, the only observable relationships among these factors are those related to psychological states and health-behavior patterns. However, for a growing number of scientists, health-care practitioners and others, relationships also exist among belief systems, spirituality, or religious practices, and health. Many spiritual and religious individuals believe this very positive and crucial relationship must continue to be investigated since health and healing cannot be explained merely in terms of psychology and behavior. Members from both groups agree that more research is needed that will verify the existence of a relationship between spirituality, religious practices and medical outcomes.

Persistent research and determination can offer the hope of one holistic medicine. Conventional medicine will no longer ward off alternative, complementary therapies or medicines. Humanity desires and needs a health care system that recognizes each individual as a single, complex and complete being, one that matches our sense of oneness. Specialties of medicines will no longer see people as divided into mere categories of specialization.

There are efforts to bridge conventional and alternative medicine. Presently, these efforts tend toward superimposing one system's concepts onto another. Conventional biochemical Western medicine may explain that the effects of acupuncture are due to biochemical entities such as endorphins. Acupuncture methodologies, in turn, seek to demonstrate that the body contains an energetic system. Proponents of each healthcare field stand on their teachings while trying to pull the other over to its understanding. Though some concepts overlap, many other areas of different fields will always stand apart while still seeking common grounds of interaction and respect. Each discipline must gain respect of and for the others' knowledge and experience.

One way to integrate different medicines is to find a concept that can be applied neutrally to all. To cite just one example, the field of "Energy Medicine" may be just such a concept that can be applied to all approaches to health care. James L. Oschman's book² of the same title presents some very compelling data in this direction. This work is a noteworthy attempt to integrate different medicines by examining them from a perspective that brings a spirit guided by scientific standards of evidence.

How the study of energy brings information, and how energy/information offers fresh understanding of certain alternative medicines and of mind-body medicine. Is energy and its study expansive enough to link, in a fundamental way, a variety of different health care systems, including mind-body medicine? Conventional medicine already uses the heart and brain as conveyors of energy/information in a clinical way (e.g., electrocardiograms and electroencephalograms, respectively).

The Influence of Mind in Health and Illness

The scientific evidence for the mind's influence on the body comes from three converging areas of research:

- Physiological research that investigates the biological and biochemical connections between the brain and body.
- Epidemiological research seeks and demonstrates correlations between psychological, psychosocial factors and certain illnesses in the population at large.
- Clinical research tests the effectiveness of mind-body approaches in preventing, alleviating, or treating specific diseases. It relates the course of a patient's disease and how effectively mind-body approaches can influence the course.

When scientific knowledge combines these three approaches, there is the possibility for a holistic picture of body/mind/spirit oneness.

Christina Puchalski, founder and director of the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health, urged universities and medical schools to develop programs to inform medical students and health care providers in this subject matter. "Despite the schism between religion and medicine in the mid-20th century, there has been a general movement in the last 15-20 years to recognize more than the physical aspect of care,"³ she noted.

Traditional teachings have focused the medical students' attention and consciousness on the entity of disease and its causes and not on the entities of health and well being and their causes. In order to do the latter, the personage of the patient must be the focus. The general public has been demanding just such attention to their wholeness. Largely unassisted by conventional medicine, the public began searching for alternatives; now the scientific medical field is beginning to respond. Puchalski noted the Association of American Medical College's recent requirements for graduation now include being dutiful and altruistic. Responding to this, she stated "In order to bring medicine back to the service aspect, we must understand our patients and their illnesses in context of who they are."⁴

Body/Mind Integration With Religion and Spirituality

Friedlander et. al.⁵ in a study of a Jewish population demonstrated a difference in the occurrence of myocardial infarction in the secular group as opposed to the Orthodox group. The secular group had a higher incidence of first myocardial infarction, than did the orthodox group. Goldbourt et. al. demonstrated in the prospective study of 10,059 males that the "most religious" (as categorized in the study) had a 20% decreased risk of fatal coronary disease compared with the "less religious" and non-religious group.⁶ McCullough et. al. analyzed 42 studies that comprised 126,000 participants. They found that religious involvement was associated with less cardiovascular disease or cardiovascular mortality. They further concluded:

. . . researchers should use more reliable measures of multiple dimensions of religious involvement (e.g., public religious involvement, private religious activities, religious beliefs, religious motivations and religious coping). In addition, more sophisticated statistical methods (i.e., structural equation modeling) should be used to model the mechanisms (including substantive mechanisms, such as psychosocial or physiological pathways, as well as

methodological mechanisms such as confounding) by which religious involvement could obtain its associations with mortality . . .⁷

In a nationwide survey reported in *Behavior Today*, 90% of Americans responded favorably to a question of their belief in God.⁸ A *Psychology Today* survey found that 59% of churchgoers expressed dissatisfaction with organized religion and thought that some churches spend too much time on organizational issues and were too restrictive on morality.⁹ Of those surveyed, 24% also indicated that they would like to have a deeper meaning to life. However research continues to reveal that “church participation” protects against such things as stress and some have attempted to demonstrate that illnesses are less and that life is prolonged. It is noted that these studies have limited their research to churches and their methodology of study to such factors as frequency of attendance and participation. Do these findings apply to other mystical, philosophical or “New Thought” groups? The differences between religion and spirituality take on an added significance in the context of health and healing.

A physician and author who has written on the role of mind/body interactions in the treatment of cancers, Seigal, also discusses a distinction between religion and spirituality:

In our culture, for many people I see, religion can be a destructive force. In some cases, religion seems to be teaching people that they deserve to suffer, they are sinners, and disease is an appropriate punishment. But I can not accept this. Those are rules made by humans. If one accepts the messages of spirituality and love, grace is available to all. Religion can support you and in a sense hold you in the palm of its hand, or it can grasp and possess you. Too often, I think, we are possessed by religion. Spirituality is a healing force. With spirituality there are no rules related to God’s love and God’s ability to sustain us.¹⁰

The scientific evidence for negative effects of religion on health is far less compelling than the mounting number of research studies that show positive effects.

A renowned radiation oncologist, O. Carl Simonton, M.D., researched for many years the connection between mind and body. He writes:

I believe that the power of the mind goes far beyond what I first imagined. In addition, I believe that beyond the body and mind, there is another aspect of healing that needs to be addressed, the spiritual aspect . . . The dictionary defines “spirit” as the life principle, especially in humans and the feelings and motivating parts of our lives . . . Our work with patients had demonstrated that health involves body, mind and spirit. And while the mind alone can be used to influence the physical state, it is used most effectively when it is aware of spirit.¹¹

Medical scientists are continuing to explore and are finding definite relationships between health and well being and spirituality. N. Lee Smith, internist at the University of Utah School of Medicine emphasizes that spirituality in health is “a state of well-being—not just the absence of disease; the quality of existence in which one is at peace with himself and in good concord with the environment; a sense of empowerment and personal control that includes

feeling heard and valued, feeling in control over one's responses (but not necessarily in control over the environment); a sense of connectedness to one's deepest self, to other people, and to all regarded as good; a sense of meaning and purpose- giving of self for a purpose of value, having a sense of mission; finding meaning and wisdom in here-and-now difficulties, enjoying the process of growth and having a vision of one's potential; and hope-having positive expectations.”¹²

The Power of Spirituality in Enhancing Positive Mind/Body Relations

Banks delves even more deeply into this phenomenon called spiritual health and the dimensions it adds to the quality of life and health. She questioned health professionals, health educators, students and others working in health and medical fields. She concluded that 8 ideas are involved in the definition, among them are: an element that gives meaning and purpose to life, ethics and principles to live by; selflessness; caring and doing for others; a commitment to a supreme being; recognition of laws and powers beyond the rational yet being hazily known and which beacons faith; and the most pleasure-producing quality of humans.”

A further conclusion for her included four aspects of spiritual health: Unifying force which harmonizes the physical, mental, emotional and social aspects and dimensions of health. The spiritual dimension is this unifying force which unites all into wholeness. Spirituality in health generates in the consciousness, a meaning in life, which may express itself differently in each person. It is essential to having a real will to live. The spiritual dimensions in health relate a bond which urges us to share such qualities as love, caring, empathy, and compassion with other people, and a belief, perception or faith that there is some law and power at work within this universe and that this law and/or power is above and beyond the natural and rational.¹³

Scientific studies continue to demonstrate that spirituality and the cultivation of spiritual health have an influence on physical, mental and emotional health, many times in dramatic ways. Bruno Cortis, a leading cardiologist asks, “How can health be without spirituality? Can the body live without the Soul that makes it? The spiritual powers within far surpass any others; transcendent, they lift all of humanity.”¹⁴

Health care scientists are exploring other aspects of care beyond and above the traditional physical or material aspect. For example, these university scientists are demonstrating that when patients are taught to meditate with eyes closed and to focus in quiet and stillness on simply the feeling of their breath moving in and out of their bodies, this lessens their distress and produces feelings of relief from many symptoms. This simple practice works best if made part of a daily routine.

There are many studies demonstrating a strong connection between the mind, brain and the immune system. The immune system serves as a guardian of the body and protects it from attacks, internal and external. It is a complex system having at its disposal about a trillion cells called lymphocytes and approximately a hundred million trillion molecules referred to as antibodies. Dr. Steven Locke, a director of psychiatry at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, states the immune system is sensitive to a number of influences. He sums up the role of the immune system as a “surveillance mechanism that protects the host from disease causing

microorganisms. It regulates susceptibility to infectious diseases, cancer, allergies, and autoimmune disorders.”¹⁵

How does the mind-body connection affect the immune system? A growing body of evidence points to the conclusion that the majority of illnesses are influenced by our emotions, positively, or negatively. Although we know that many illnesses are caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other microorganisms, we are beginning to search for what other factors are at play which make us susceptible so that we become ill when we contact disease producing agents. In other words, what determines the quality of our immunity? Scientists are finding that what we think and how we feel seems to have powerful effects on the biological functions of our bodies, and that there is a complex, dynamic interaction between the mind and the body.

Immunology and endocrinology have attracted increased interest from mind/body researchers as the science behind it has become better established. The most important development has been the explosion of research in the field of psychoneuroimmunology or PNI: “psycho” for mind, “neuro” for the neuro-endocrine system (the nervous and hormonal systems), and “immunology” for the immune system. This science which deals with how the brain affects the immune cells and how the behaviors can affect the immune system is known as psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)¹⁶. Dr. Robert Ader developed this nomenclature at New York University. Scientists in this field are interested in the interactions between the mind, the brain and the immune system.

Another physician, David Spiegel,¹⁷ work with support groups for women with breast cancer, and his work represents a paradigm shift for research in this area. Spiegel, a psychiatrist never anticipated that his work would show that the mind has an impact on physical health. He led support groups for women being treated for advanced breast cancer that had spread throughout the body in a pattern that carries a very poor prognosis. These women, placed within groups, talked over their day-to-day troubles with each other in this supportive setting. He found that these women suffered less from the emotional distress that accompanied cancer than other women in the same medical situation did. This information showed that the groups did improve the women’s quality of life. The group disbanded. A decade later Spiegel went back to the women’s records to see how long they had survived after the groups disbanded. He was surprised to find that women in the support groups had survived twice as long as the others. These findings encouraged other scientists to look closely at the possible clinical effects of mind/body treatments.

Time magazine reported on the research of Dr. Dean Ornish at the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in California. Dr. Ornish demonstrated that a Mind/Body program could prevent or reverse severe coronary artery blockage.¹⁸ Dr. Robert Ader’s key experiments in psychoneuroimmunology laid the foundation for the relationship of body, mind and emotion. In ***Psychoneuroimmunology*** he gives as scientific evidence for the relationship the following:

- The central nervous system is linked to both the bone marrow and the thymus (where immune cells are produced) and to the spleen and lymph nodes where such cells are stored.
- Scientists have found nerve endings in the tissues of the immune system.

- Changes in the brain and spinal cord affect how the immune system responds. When researchers trigger an immune response in the body, there are changes in the way the brain and spinal cord respond.
- Researchers have discovered that lymphocytes (important immune system cells) respond chemically to hormones and neurotransmitters, and that they can actually produce hormones and neurotransmitters.
- Cells that are actively involved in an immune response produce substances that send signals to the central nervous system.
- The body's immune response can be influenced by stress; stress and other psychosocial factors can make the body more susceptible to infectious diseases and autoimmune diseases (e.g., arthritis) or cancer.
- The body's immune response can be "learned," modified by the same kind of classical conditioning used in psychological experiments to train dogs.
- Immune function can be influenced and changed by psychoactive drugs, including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin and nicotine.¹⁹

There has been an expansion of Adler's work to show that people can consciously control the immune system by what they think. G. Richard Smith, a psychiatrist at the University of Arkansas used guided visualization to demonstrate this.²⁰ A patient having had chicken pox was tested and found to have excellent immunity against the disease. Through visualization instruction the patient was able to decrease the reaction of her immune system to the virus by visualizing a decrease in the size of a bump at the site of the injection. (The bump represented the body's defense mechanism at work. The larger the bump, the greater the immune system's response). The patient visualized the bump being smaller and smaller. Blood tests confirmed that her immune system responded to her visualization; the number of white blood cells responding to the virus became less and less.

Dr. Howard Hall at the State University of Pennsylvania also used imagery in research on immunology. When his patients were instructed to visualize their white blood cells as powerful sharks, the activity and effectiveness of their immune systems increased.²¹ G. Frank Lawllies demonstrated the same techniques with cancer patients and found that their degree of success was dependent upon the vividness, strength and clarity of the mental visualizations.²²

Empowering Patients Through Training for Discipline and Control

A growing body of scientific evidence is indicating that our emotions, the way we think and feel, can and does play a role in the quality of our health and in disease prevention and health maintenance. Some researchers state that as many as 50% of patients seeking care have physical symptoms directly related by feeling and emotions. Some believe the percentage is even higher. Henry reported research demonstrating that certain hormones that are associated with different emotional responses are released into the body; these hormones can affect the health status of the body and emotions.²³ Hence, there is a biological and physiological basis of why feelings, emotions and beliefs impact health. Diseases can be the result of emotionally induced shifts in hormones progressively creating biological and physiological reactions that may eventually lead to hypertension, stroke or heart failure. Although emotions may be one of several factors in the

development of disease, this does not prove that every case of hypertension, stroke or heart failure has its origin in emotional states.

The inability to express emotions is an even greater cause of disease.²⁴ Loyola University professor of Psychiatry, Domeena Renshaw, claims that “emotions have to be expressed somewhere, somehow. If they’re repeatedly suppressed, and there is conflict about controlling them, they then often show themselves through physical symptoms.”²⁵ Evidence confirms that the way one perceives their emotions, feelings and stress determines how the body’s systems are affected. In addition, further evidence shows that these emotions, feelings, and stress can in turn be altered by changes in one’s attitudes and perceptions. Meditation and participation in group therapy are examples of techniques that have had positive results in dealing with these conditions.

Studies continue to demonstrate how thoughts, emotions, beliefs and feelings can relate to the immune system in positive and/or negative ways. Researchers have produced an impressive list of conditions caused or aggravated by stress and emotions. To name a few: high blood pressure, stroke, angina pectoris, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, hyperthyroidism, migraine headaches and many more including the common cold. In *Molecules of Emotions*,²⁶ neuroscientist Candance Pert offers further understanding of the power of mind and feeling in affecting health and well being. She concludes that the emotions and their biological components work to establish the crucial link between mind and body.

Further Aspects of Faith and Belief in Health

In the body-mind connection, one of the most striking demonstrations of belief and faith in action is the placebo effect, the physical change that occurs in the body as a result of what we think a pill or a procedure will do. What the placebo effect suggests to us is that we may be able to change what takes place in our bodies by changing our state of mind. A general definition of placebo is “substances or procedures without specific activity against the condition being evaluated.” If a person deeply believes that a pill is going to work in a certain way, chances are it will – even if the pill is fashioned of nothing more than table sugar.

The word placebo comes from the Latin word meaning, “placate” or the phrase meaning, “I will please.” We know a placebo to be “a pill that is given with the intention of treating a medical disease, but which has no specific biological or chemical activity against the condition. However, a placebo doesn’t necessarily have to be a pill; it can be a potion, a surgical procedure, or any other medical procedure. And, according to scientific medical researchers, the effects of a placebo are not imaginary but can be physically measured with biological and physiological tests. Scientists tell us also that the effects of a placebo are often more potent than those of the actual medication or procedure.

Placebos are strongly related to the degree of faith involved. If the patient/subjects belief is strong that a prescribed remedy will work, it will. A review²⁷ published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* stated that placebos can be effective in a variety of illnesses and can affect any organ or system in the body. There is scientific evidence demonstrating that placebos are effective against angina pectoris, rheumatoid arthritis, pain, hay fever, headache,

cough, peptic ulcer, and high blood pressure. The same journal cites studies to also show that placebos can be effective when used against certain psychiatric disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia. The patient's belief and faith triggers biochemical and/or neurochemicals that bring about the desired result of placebo usage. Placebos are strongly related to the degree of faith involved.

A classical example of the placebo effect occurred in a New York hospital in 1950.²⁸ Dr. Stewart Wolf, a highly respected physician, treated women who suffered severe nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Wolf informed the pregnant women that he was going to alleviate nausea and vomiting and that he would give them a drug to do this. He emphasized and assured them that after taking this drug, their nausea and vomiting would disappear. Wolf gave the women syrup of ipecac, a well-known drug used in the medical profession to induce vomiting. The patients faithfully followed his instructions and took the medication. In some patients this resulted in a disappearance of their nausea and vomiting. The researchers concluded that the women's *belief* in the drug's powers and belief and faith in what Wolfe told them were so strong that they actually counteracted the pharmacological and physiological actions of the drug.

The effects of Prayer on health are well researched and documented. This effort should continue. Health scientists giving much attention to prayer demonstrate the powerful physiological and biological effects of prayer on the body. Dr. Herbert Benson developed a clinical work called "the relaxation response."²⁹ In this relaxation response, the body has the ability to enter a "scientifically definable state" of relaxation during which changes occur in the body. "Metabolism slows down, blood pressure drops. Breathing slows, heart rate lowers and even the brain waves are less active," states Benson in his book, *Your Maximum Mind*. Benson has written extensively on his results using the relaxation response from curing a crippling angina to dropping a threateningly high blood pressure.

N. Lee Smith, a researcher at the University of Utah states, "Prayer helps one to focus on deep and important values and in so doing to enter into a relaxed meditative state drawing on spiritual power that develops a sense of Connectedness and also develops hope and that has been know to affect medical outcomes. The mind has the ability to heal in ways that are largely unexplainable".³⁰ Randolph Byrd demonstrated differences between patient groups in a coronary care unit in which the use of prayer was the major factor under investigation.³¹ Of the 393 total number of patients, 192 received intercessory prayer (IP). Byrd's discusses the fact that IP appears to have had a "beneficial therapeutic effect in patients admitted to a coronary care unit." The results showed statistical significance in the number of cases requiring intubation and in the use of antibiotics and required diuretics when the analyses included information ("severity score") on the post-hospitalization events for each patient in the prayer group.

Dossey also mentions results of several studies by Braud and Schlity dealing with a methodology for the objective study of transpersonal imagery. These studies suggested that:

1. the distant effects of mental imagery compare favorably with the magnitude of effects of one's individual thoughts, feelings and emotions on one's own physiology;
2. the ability to use positive imagery to achieve distant effects is apparently widespread in the human population;

3. these effects can occur at distances of up to 20 meters (greater distances were not tested);
4. subjects with a greater need to be influenced by positive mental intent (i.e., those for whom the influence would be beneficial), seem more susceptible;
5. the distant effects of intentionality can occur without the recipient's knowledge;
6. those participating in the studies seemed unconcerned that the effect could be used for harm, and no such harmful effects were seen;
7. the distant effects of mutual intentionality are not invariable, as subjects appear capable of preventing an effect if it is unwanted”³²

Rosicrucian Perspective

The Rosicrucian Order AMORC (Ancient and Mystical Order of Rosae Crucis) encompasses a myriad array of teachings, including but not limited to the mind, the physical body and healing. However, it is not and has never been exclusively, a “healing organization.” The Order’s teachings are centuries old,³³ inclusive in nature and have been tried and tested.

Many Rosicrucian members are professionally active in many aspects of both natural and physical sciences, basic and applied research, and the field of medicine (e.g., practicing physicians and professional health care workers). As a student of mysticism and spirituality, one must look forward to the continuous study, scientific investigation and demonstration of the natural as well as the spiritual laws of the Universe. These findings can only help serve humanity’s evolution and growth.

Throughout its various levels or degrees of study, the AMORC’s students are taught many subjects including those dealing with the body, and its vascular, nervous, and endocrine systems. An entire level of study is devoted to the body, its development, and how one's being may receive and utilize energy in a constructive and creative manner energy. These instructions are designed to help the student live in harmony with the laws that govern life and that will aid in bringing peace, harmony and health of body, mind, emotions and spirit. Just as the research presented in this paper has demonstrated, the student is also taught that the mind is not limited to the physical brain.

By understanding the functions of the mind, its healing attributes, and its conscious and unconscious effects, locally (as in “contact healing” when the healer and the one being healed are in physical contact with each other) and non-locally (as in “absent healing” when the healer is not physically present but at a distant from the one being acted upon), the student learns how to bring about changes and maintain harmony of body, mind and environment. The teachings emphasize ways for developing a relationship with God, the self, Universal Laws and the Soul. These relationships extend and develop inwardly as well as being manifested as right relations and good will toward humanity and all life forms on Earth. The student is further taught that the inner being is more than that which the five physical senses indicate and that there is an intelligent Mind-Energy-Essence which pervades the Universe and in which we live and move.

This Divine Essence links one to the other by its laws of continuity and communication. By means of the Laws of its nature, we are able to send loving thoughts into the world and to one another, in the forms of thoughts, feelings, prayers and blessings. These aid in bringing health, harmony, and peace of mind to humanity. The Intelligence within each person is of this Divine Essence. This Universal Intelligence receives the vibrations of our visualizations, thoughts, feelings and beliefs and manifests them according to Spiritual Laws.

One of the recurrent themes in Spiritual writings is the expressed desire that everyone becomes acquainted with these Cosmic and Spiritual laws and becomes co-creators and assumes responsibility for creating the realities of his/her life. Practical spirituality urges a unity and balance of body/mind/spirit and emotion.

Conclusion

Science is now concurring with the desire to gain knowledge of Cosmic and Spiritual laws and moving further toward exploring these laws in greater depth. Research is already increasingly demonstrating that our mind, thoughts, emotions and feelings create our reality. Mind/body approaches will become more widely used as a regular part of health care since they are now being taught in universities and medical schools, demonstrating that mind/body approaches are regarded as useful in improving the quality of life and in reducing pain and suffering. Yet, from a scientific point of view, many questions about mind/body and spirituality in medicine remain to be answered.

The Rosicrucian Order teachings embrace spiritual and natural laws. They both support and encourage the scientific community to continue in its efforts to demonstrate these truths for the benefit of humanity and to the glory of the Absolute. There are many reasons for science and others to consider this as productive, meaningful work and to give it a high priority, including the minimal physical and emotional risks and high benefits of using these techniques, the low economic cost of most mind/body approaches, and the capability to apply these techniques in the context of conventional medicine, rather than in opposition to it. They can and should be used along with standard medical care.

To quote Ralph Waldo Emerson “Great men are they who see that spiritual force is stronger than any material force, that thoughts rule the world.”

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