True Health Physical-Mental-Spiritual

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Autism

Even with tighter diagnostic criteria used in the United States the number of children with autism in this country continues to rise. As evidence of this disturbing trend, a recent report on autism in California indicates that cases of autism have nearly doubled in the last four years. Dr. Ron Huff, senior psychologist who oversaw the preparation of the report observed, "The number of cases is accelerating and we do not know why."

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that autism occurs in approximately 2-7 cases per 1,000 children in the United States at an annual cost of about three billion dollars. The CDC is currently studying the prevalence of autism in thirteen states. The results of the study will help determine whether the alarming rise in autism in California is a national trend.

What is Autism?

Hollywood has featured characters with autistic features in several popular movies, including *Rain Man* and *Mercury Rising*. Whereas the portrayal of autism in these films tend to focus on autistic individuals as extraordinarily gifted in mathematics ("autistic savants") who are socially inept, the reality of this disorder is much more complex.

Autism manifests along a spectrum from mild to severe with symptoms that can present in a wide variety of combinations. People with classical autism show three types of symptoms: impaired social interaction, problems with verbal and nonverbal communication and imagination, and unusual or severely limited activities and interests. However, some individuals with autism may make eye contact, show affection, smile and laugh, and demonstrate a variety of other emotions.

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Versatile Lavender

You are probably familiar with the aromatic fragrance of lavender used in soaps, shampoos, and perfumes. However, you may not fully appreciate its versatility as an herbal medicine.

Historically, lavender has been highly valued by herbalists for its ability to relieve headaches and calm nervous tension. Modern research has shown lavender oil to be an effective antiseptic, promoting healing of burns, wounds, and sores. It can also reduce the pain and inflammation of insect bites. The fragrant scent of lavender comes from the oil in the blue-violet flowers that can be used fresh, dried, or steam distilled (to extract the essential oil).

Lavender was recommended in nineteen of Edgar Cayce's readings for a variety of effects. The medical prescriptions of lavender are generally related to its calming and restorative qualities. A combination of lavender and witchhazel was recommended for use in a fume bath in two cases involving excessive muscular tension and nerve exhaustion. Several Cayce readings suggest that the aroma of lavender can aid with attunement during meditation.

Here are some practical tips for using lavender to improve your mental and physical well being:

* Soak up lavender by placing a few drops of lavender in your bath water.
* Inhale its healing fragrance by putting a drop or two of lavender oil on a lamp or diffuser designed specifically for aromatherapy.
* Absorb lavender oil through your skin when you get a massage. It is best to mix it with another oil such as olive oil. When prescribed by Cayce for massage, it was always mixed with other oils. As with any oil, it is always a good idea to test a small area first to minimize the risk of allergic reaction.
* If you feel a headache coming on, massage lavender oil into

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RE: Glyco-nutrients. People are very interested in the new research regarding glyco-nutrients. Did Edgar Cayce have anything to say about that. Could you please inform me whether Glycothymoline is related to these new glyco-nutritients. A.P., email

The concept of glyco-nutrients is based on the work of Nobel laureate Gunter Blobel and others who discovered that cells require eight essential sugars ("saccharides") to communicate and function effectively. Imbalances or absence of these sugars may cause or contribute to a variety of illnesses. The book *Sugars That Heal* (Random House) covers the basics of glyco-nutrient theory and practice. I regard this as a promising area of research. I am not aware of any specific discussion of glyco-nutrients in the readings. The alkalizing mouthwash Glycothymoline is not directly related to the modern research on glyco-nutrients. D.M.

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Symptoms of autism usually appear during the first three years of childhood and continue throughout life. Although there is no cure, appropriate management may foster relatively normal development and reduce undesirable behaviors.

Possible Causes of Autism

Medical science has not yet identified a definite cause of autism. Heredity is a likely factor, probably as a predisposition rather than an absolute cause. Some researchers believe that problems during pregnancy or delivery, environmental factors (such as viral infections or exposure to toxins), or inherent metabolic imbalances produce autism. Autism is not caused by bad parenting – there are no known psychological factors that have been shown to cause autism.

There is strong evidence that the sensory nervous system is abnormal in autism. Many of the symptoms of autism can be explained as reactions caused by overstimulation or understimulation of the sensory system. As a result, children with autism are unable to fully integrate or organize stimuli in the brain. Thus, seemingly mild sensory stimuli can overwhelm the system and provoke social withdrawal or other autistic behaviors. We will revisit this aspect of autism when we review the Cayce approach later in this article.

A possible link of autism to childhood vaccination stirred up a storm of controversy a few years ago when researchers in England published reports that autism may be linked to MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) shots. Subsequently, a committee formed to investigate these initial findings concluded that the evidence does not support the autism/MMR vaccine connection, although the concept can not be entirely ruled out as a factor in some cases.

Ironically, Dr. Andrew Wakefield, the autism researcher who first publicized the potential link between MMR vaccine and autism was fired by the Royal Free Hospital in London one day after a researcher at Harvard University substantially replicated his findings. Keeping a positive frame of mind Dr. Wakefield philosophically observed, "I realize now that everything that has happened to me was inevitable from the beginning. If you offend the system, then the system will take its revenge. One great benefit of this arrangement is that I shall no longer have to spend a considerable amount of time in distracting political negotiations with the Medical School and will be able to devote 100% of my effort to the research."

The Gut Connection

One of the most fascinating and exciting outcomes of Dr. Wakefield's work is the discovery of a possible gut connection in the cause and treatment of autism, adding autism to the growing list of neurological illnesses with abdominal features.

While researching the MMR/autism association, Dr. Wakefield investigated a consecutive series of children with chronic enterocolitis (bowel inflammation) and autistic symptoms. The twelve children (average age six years) had a history of normal development followed by loss of acquired skills (including language) together with diarrhea and abdominal pain.

In a related project 47 out of 50 autistic children studied exhibited significant bowel pathology. When subjected to colon cleansing, these children showed notable improvement in their autism symptoms. The researchers concluded, "We reemphasize the fact that there is a consistent pattern of gut inflammation in a high proportion of children within the broad autistic spectrum. Understanding the link between the bowel and the brain in autism may allow new insights into this devastating illness."

Dr. Timothy Buie, the Harvard pediatric gastroenterologist who first replicated Wakefield's findings on the MMR/autism connection, has reported finding chronic inflammation of the intestinal tract in a significant number of over 400 gastrointestinal endoscopies with biopsies conducted on children with autism. These findings are leading Dr. Buie to conduct more research into dietary treatments for autism, including gluten-free/casein-free diets for autistic children.

Further evidence of intestinal involvement in autism has surfaced when a substance called secretin has been surprisingly effective in the treatment of autism for some children. After Victoria and Gary Beck successfully treated their autistic child with secretin and triggered interest in this substance, researchers at University of Maryland studied the therapeutic effects of secretin on three autistic children and noted significant clinical improvement, both gastrointestinal and behavioral.

Secretin is a natural substance, produced in the intestinal tract by all mammals. While it is not a drug and not harmful, the FDA nevertheless requires that it be sold only by prescription.

Secretin is now being tested with more autistic children to determine its therapeutic potential. As in the MMR/autism debate, some early studies have failed to support the role of secretin as a treatment for autism. Researchers acknowledge the tentative nature of the findings and the need for further research. See the article on page three of this newsletter for some pointers on how to understand conflicting research findings and the implications for lay people who just want a practical answers to health questions.

The Cayce Perspective

Although the medical diagnosis of autism was not available during Edgar Cayce's era, several readings given for individuals exhibiting autistic features may provide some insight into this disorder. Most notably, three readings given for an eight-year-old girl (2253), are indicative of autism. This child would not talk and continuously wrung her hands. Edgar Cayce

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truehealth@edgarcayce.org

Understanding Medical Research

Do you ever feel confused and frustrated when you read about a medical study that apparently overturns the findings of a previously touted study? Take heart my friend, you are not alone. I will try to make sense of this dilemma and provide some simple pointers for sorting out the inherent confusion surrounding health research.

Terminology

Diagnostic terms are basically arbitrary. Disease categories are made up by human beings and changed frequently to reflect new understandings about the causes and treatment of illness. Like any human creation, diagnostic categories tend to fall out of fashion. In the absence of major breakthroughs, it sometimes seems as if they are changed just to make us feel better about our ignorance. Changing words gives the illusion of progress.

For example, when you read the research literature on autism you will find terms like "minimal brain dysfunction" and "pervasive developmental disorder." Don't be confused by these complicated sounding designations – they basically mean that we do not really understand what is causing the problem. Don't let the semantic shell game get you down. We do need to use words to communicate about diseases and treatments, but let's not mistake the words for the reality that they represent. Try to focus on the reality rather than be distracted by complex terminology.

Variability

Once we penetrate the fog of medical labels, it soon becomes apparent that we have been spoiled by simplistic thinking about the causes and treatment of disease. We have been led to believe that there are specific illnesses with specific causes and specific treatments – one cause and one cure per disease. Some of this erroneous thinking is due to our relative success in curing infectious disease. We just need to find the offending germ and target it with a "magic bullet" cure.

The problem is that most disease is not caused by a germ or any single, specific factor. Even if an infectious agent (like a virus or bacteria) is the primary cause of an illness, we each vary in how susceptible we are to that germ and which therapy will work best with our unique physiology.

In recent years, some people have applied the same type of simplistic thinking to heredity, which, in many respects has replaced germ theory as the simplistic explanation for all disease. Thus, genetic explanations of disease tend to focus on the specific gene that produces a specific disease. Serious researchers know better – it is more often a combination of several genetic factors that make us *vulnerable* to disease. Other factors are also usually involved including environmental and psychological factors (such as stress). This is the multifactorial approach to understanding disease.

Subgroups

Applying a multifactorial model to autism, we may find that there are probably several subgroups of factors that can produce autistic symptoms. Perhaps MMR vaccinations constitute one subgroup of this disorder – not the only cause.

It seems very likely that some sort of digestive system dysfunction can cause or at least contribute to autism. Based on what I have seen in the Cayce readings, I suspect that spinal nerve dysfunction could be a factor in some cases. Hereditary predisposition (which the Cayce readings identify as the pathway of karma) is likely to be a factor as well. Can you see how this complex multifactorial model of disease can complicate research?

If a small sample of research participants are selected for a study, how do we know that the sample represents all the possible causes of a disease syndrome? If a very large sample population is used for a research project, how can we be sure that small but important subgroups are not swamped by the overall averaging effect of the large sample?

For example, a promising therapy (such as secretin for autism) may be determined as a relatively ineffective treatment when outcomes are averaged for a large group. Yet, for an individual that falls within a small subgroup of causation, this treatment may be extremely effective. When interpreting research results, be careful in assuming that a large population sample is necessarily better than a small one.

Politics and Economics

As Dr. Wakefield realized when he published his results on a possible MMR vaccination/autism link (see the article on page 1), politics and economics are potent factors in medical research. Governments do not want to acknowledge that an official health program may cause or contribute to illness, yet this sometimes happens. Huge sums of money are at stake when medicines are linked to bad side effects – both in terms of lost sales and litigation.

We cannot assume that medical research occurs in an ideological vacuum. Even the choice by an editor to include an article in a medical journal involves distinctly human motivations. At present it seems that many mainstream medical journals are reflecting a backlash of opinion against alternative medicine. I have noticed that some questionable studies (strictly in terms of quality) have recently been published in major journals with the apparent intent to expose the shortcomings of alternative medicine.

When reading about a research study, don't be naive. Be sure to pay attention to the source of the funding and who may have benefit from the findings.

Some Practical Pointers

Obviously medical research can be complex and confusing. Here are some simple pointers that I have found helpful in sorting through research findings and try-

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Wellness Week Spa Retreat in October

The A.R.E. is again offering a wellness week experience this fall at Virginia Beach. During the week of October 18-24 participants will experience a jump-start toward wholeness and rejuvenation.

The program is limited to eleven people so that everyone will get plenty of personal attention. Having a cook on hand to prepare meals is a delightful way to be introduced to the Cayce diet. Participants can also learn how to do some of the Cayce home remedies from the experts in the A.R.E. Health Services department. This spa retreat will target your specific concerns and provide you with a safe, twenty-four-hour-a-day environment to trigger or supplement a total lifestyle improvement.

If you feel the need for physical/mental/spiritual rejuvenation, consider spending a few days this fall in Virginia Beach at Wellness Week. For more information, call Leslie Cayce at (757) 428-3588, ext. 7222.

Health News

Eating Fish Reduces Alzheimer's Risk

A study published in the *Archives of Neurology* (Vol. 60 No. 7, July 2003) suggests that older people who eat fish at least once each week may decrease the risk of Alzheimer's disease by more than one half. The study focused on 815 Chicago residents 65 years and older who recorded dietary habits over a four-year period. The fishy meals included tuna sandwiches, fishsticks, and shellfish. Amounts were not specified.

The study participants may have benefitted from the omega-3 fatty acid found in fish. Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to improve learning and memory in animals. The omega-3 benefit was reinforced in some of the participants who also ate vegetables and nuts that also contain this important fatty acid.

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traced the cause of the condition to pressures along the spine that produced aberrant nerve impulses making the child to be "oversensitive." Osteopathic manipulations to relieve the pressure were recommended. A mild, natural herbal formula was suggested to calm the child. An energy medicine device (Radial Appliance) was prescribed to balance the system.

Hypnotic suggestion ("suggestive therapeutics") was recommended to address the habitual, involuntary hand wringing, lack of normal development, and sensory system oversensitivity.

Although we have no long-term documentation in this case, a letter from Mrs. Pope of the Rosehill School (where the child was staying) noted, "I think she has improved noticeably and more so since she has had the battery although it has been used such a short time."

In another case, four readings were given for a nineteen year old male [2014] who was exhibiting repetitious, involuntary movements and antisocial behaviors. This series of readings also described nervous system incoordination involving the sensory nervous system. Pressures along the spine and in the abdominal nerve plexus associated with the digestive system were noted. The treatment plan was very similar to the first case. The minimal follow-up correspondence does not indicate whether the recommendations were applied or the eventual outcome.

A series of twelve readings were given for a young girl (1179) who was seven years old when she received her first reading. Her readings and follow up correspondence suggest possible mild autism. In this case, Edgar Cayce described problems with the digestive system that were contributing to the difficult psychosocial development of this child. Various digestive aids and nutritional supplements were recommended, including Ventriculin, a dietary supplement made from the gastric tissue (a possible parallel to secretin?).

Otherwise the treatment plan was very consistent with previous cases we have reviewed. Considering the current research linking autism to wheat sensitivities, this case does contain a fascinating response to a question about substituting other grains (rye, rice, oats, buckwheat, or corn) for wheat. Cayce advised, "It would be well to discontinue the greater portion of the wheat products, if these others are used – and they are all very well to be used." (1179-5) According to correspondence from her mother, Ms. 1179 became a school teacher at age twenty-two and married thirteen years later.

Although the above cases vary somewhat with regard to symptoms and severity, some common themes are worth noting. In all these cases Edgar Cayce focused on nervous system incoordination involving the sensory nervous system. All these individuals were described as oversensitive (even "supersensitive"). Nerve pressures were cited as causative factors. Spinal manipulation was consistently recommended, as was the use of the Radial Appliance to assist with balancing and coordinating the system. Problems with the digestive system and intestinal tract was significant in two of these cases (1179 and 2014). Therapies such as abdominal castor oil packs, diet, and dietary supplements were suggested. The mental and spiritual aspects of healing were prominent in all three cases. Suggestive therapeutics was usually recommended. The spiritual focus of the family and caregivers was strongly emphasized. Thus a blending of therapies into an integrated treatment plan was the typical approach by Cayce for the treatment of conditions that are currently called autism.

The A.R.E. has available a treatment protocol for autism that can be obtained from Deborah Thompson, R.N. (757-496-6411).

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the forehead and temples (but away from the eyes).

* For cuts, bruises, and insect bites drop lavender oil directly onto the skin.
* To reduce insomnia, sprinkle a few drops on a pillow at bedtime.
* For nervous exhaustion or depression, consider lavender tea which can be made from the dried lavender flowers (1 1/2 tsp. flowers to 8 oz. water) which can be drunk up to 4 times a day.
* Remember, more is not necessarily better. Use essential oils sparingly to achieve maximum benefits.

Research cont'd from page 3

ing to make the information practical in my life:

* *Reactivity* – Avoid knee-jerk reactions and extreme positions when surprising or disconcerting research outcomes are reported. Recognize that we are relatively ignorant about the causes and treatment of most illnesses and that future studies may very well overturn the latest findings. That is the nature of science.
* *Common Sense* – Use common sense when interpreting research results. Don't let complex jargon or technical labels distract you from a basic understanding of a problem or condition. Trust your common sense and inner guidance about the meaning of medical research while seeking to understand it.
* *Cayce as a Benchmark* – I find the Cayce health information to be a tremendous resource for understanding modern medical research. Although diagnostic labels and terminology have changed somewhat over the years, the essential facts about the human condition (including our physiology) have not really changed that much.

The wisdom of the readings can be a benchmark by which to measure research findings, just as research can help us to evaluate the validity of the readings. This is why I make it a point to include the Cayce perspective in most of the articles in this newsletter.

Visit the ***True Health*** Web site:
www.edgarcayce.org/th
for more information on autism, lavender, and medical research.