

Wrong Way Medicine

Health care is a major issue in our current political forum, as well it should be. The U.S., by most accounts, has now only one statistic to show that this country leads the world in health care -- that is by far the most expensive. By most measurements of effectiveness, we compare poorly to the rest of the civilized world. And if we continue to be led down our current path, it will only get worse. And these factors will increase: health care, as a component of our cost-of-living will continue to rise; the share of every health-care dollar spent that goes to administration and insurance will grow; the number of Americans killed by our medical system -- already a huge number (250,000 per year or more by the industry's own estimates) will continue upward.

What is the problem with our medical (the term "health care" seems to no longer apply) system? It really comes down to two fundamental flaws in the way we approach human health.

Fundamental flaw #1. Lack of personal responsibility. At a rate which has increased every decade for a least the past few generations, we have allowed our personal maintenance to be placed more and more in the hands of technicians to treat our ailments. This abdication of responsibility has been rising ever since the advent of the concept of health insurance. Once a system of insurance was widely established, which has happened in only the past 50 years or so, seeking help for a physical malfunction no longer had a component of "How will I pay for this service?" The millions of veterans and their families had their own system, of course, and only had to show their military ID to get cared for. It was never great care, but it was "free". With employer paid insurance coverage available to the majority of Americans, now most everyone got "free" care. As long as somebody else was paying, we gave little thought to the services rendered -- after all, we were dealing with highly ethical, highly trained professionals. We were not about to dispute our doctor's opinion that we needed major surgery to fix our problem (even if maybe we only needed to quit eating pepperoni).

While most doctors approached their profession with compassion in their hearts, they also were quick to recognize that they were in a unique position to profit. With neither the patient nor the insurance company in the position to dispute their recommendation, how hard was it to see the benefit of suggesting a course of action that would pay than \$20,000 instead of an alternative that might net them only \$200. And so it grew. The insurance companies got smarter and changed their behavior. Few patients ever did.

Fundamental flaw #2. Using the wrong science. All of Western "traditional" (allopathic) medicine is based on concepts rooted in Newtonian physics. This model of the universe says that everything is as it appears and that the Laws of Nature function like a machine, albeit a complex one. Like any machine, if we can tear it apart and define every component, then we can fix or change any part or at least deal with it. Any data or facts presented to us that can't be explained using this model of the world are to be disputed, discredited, or buried.

Even though Albert Einstein presented us with a new model of reality eighty years ago, a model which begins to explain the unexplained, medical science has steadfastly refused to acknowledge any new perspective which could threaten the enormous cash flows they have built up. Let me expand this.

Newton gave us the beginnings of understanding of the Laws of Nature which explain the bigger pieces of the Universe. From this we eventually came to understand things like when the muscle

fibers of the heart contract in response to an electrical signal, the muscle squeezes, which causes the blood to be pumped out.

Einstein, gave us the beginning of understanding of quantum mechanics, which explains the behavior of the unseen sub-atomic components of all of the bigger pieces. From quantum mechanics we came to understand that matter doesn't really exist -- that everything is really energy and that our thoughts have direct bearing on the behavior and structure of that energy. From this, a few scientists eventually came to understand that a person who harbored negative thoughts and emotions about themselves, could, for example, eventually cause a disability of the heart – the conscious center of self-love.

The world's pharmaceutical giants want none of this -- their prosperity as they see it, is based on a continuation of centering on the old science. And since they are in the position to strongly influence the curricula of doctor's training, doctors will continue to be the front men (and women) for the drug companies. No matter that a person comes to a doctor with a pain complaint and asks for the pain medication she saw advertised on TV. No matter that the doctor writes a prescription which eases the pain, but leaves the patient feeling depressed, who then asks for an antidepressant, which brightens her mood, but upsets her stomach, who comes back for a tummy-soother which gives her constipation

Honestly now, if you were on the receiving end of this, the most profitable industry in the world, banking billions of dollars in profit every year, wouldn't you fight to hold on to all that money, even knowing the damage it was causing because your science was flawed?

So how do we get to a society where good health is the norm rather than the unusual? Frankly, I don't know. Having someone else pick up the tab for resolving your health issues has become an entitlement instead of a privilege. Perhaps if we could establish a culture similar to that once employed by the Chinese, where the local doctor got paid for keeping you healthy, but didn't get paid when you got ill, would be a helpful shift. It sure wouldn't hurt to have the nation's doctors take issue with the few giant food suppliers, who concern themselves more with revenue per acre of food crop than nutritive value.

Certainly a step in the right direction, would be to loosen the stranglehold on our perspective toward the science of medicine, which the drug companies hang onto. This would allow the expansion of research into the mind-body connection, which now can only operate on the fringes of science and gets practiced by a few in the alternative health care modalities.

It appears that millions more Americans must die or become debilitated and hundreds of thousands more get wiped out financially before the cry gets heard and politicians truly respond to the public good rather than the largesse handed out by the AMA and the drug and insurance companies to maintain the status quo. But the dim light of dawn is shining over the horizon . When that new day in true health care comes to all Americans, we will look back on these days of barbaric, selfish practices in much the same way we now look back on the practice of bleeding a person to cure their ailments.

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