

The American Institute of Stress

STRESS, SUBTLE ENERGIES AND CANCER

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A link between stress and cancer was noted over 2,000 years ago by Galen, in his treatise *De Tumoribus*. Most 18th and 19th century English physicians believed that emotional distress “was the most powerful cause of the disease”. Although the emphasis has now shifted to the role of viruses and environmental carcinogens, both clinical and laboratory studies over the past few decades have continued to demonstrate the important effects of stress on malignant growth. Widowed, divorced and separated individuals have significantly higher cancer rates than married controls. This is particularly apparent during the 12 - 18 months following the loss of a spouse. The progressive loss and disintegration of other stable relationships also appears to predispose to certain malignancies. Cancer is very rare in primitive races where lifestyles and traditions have remained constant for centuries. This is not due to diet since it can be observed in high fat intake Eskimos, as well as vegetarian African tribes. Progressive “civilization” is accompanied by correspondingly higher cancer rates, which cannot be ascribed to increased exposure to environmental carcinogens, or dietary alterations. The stress of modern lifestyles, abrupt socio-cultural changes, and the loss of traditional values and priorities appear to be much more important contributing influences.

More primitive organisms and animals rarely develop cancer, but do have a remarkable capacity for regeneration of tissues that have been lost or injured. As one moves up the phylogenetic scale to higher forms of life, this ability for purposeful regeneration decreases just as the incidence of cancer progressively increases. The salamander will regenerate a third of its brain and half of its heart following surgical removal, and can reduplicate a severed leg complete with toes within six weeks. When cancer causing chemicals are inserted in the leg of a salamander, malignancy does not result, but instead an accessory limb begins to grow at that site. It is postulated that emotional loss in humans activates the same reparative stimuli that produce purposeful regeneration in response to physical loss in lower forms of life. However, this new growth or neoplasia is now not only inappropriate, but malignant.

It is also paradoxical that all of the agencies we use to treat cancer, can also cause cancer. That applies to x-rays, chemotherapeutic drugs and a variety of hormones. Similarly, stress has been shown to both increase and retard malignant growth. However, these effects cannot be entirely explained in terms of immune systems and endocrine activities. In addition, powerful stress buffers such as a strong social support and firm faith, are associated with improved outcomes and longevity rates in cancer patients. A positive attitude that encourages a sense of control appears to be the common denominator in careful studies of patients who

have experienced unexplained spontaneous regression of cancer. New discoveries suggest that such benefits may be mediated by previously unsuspected pathways. It is now quite apparent that infinitesimally small amounts of energy have profound effects on cell growth. These cannot be understood in terms of Newtonian physics or our current appreciation of how communication occurs between cells, or how information is transmitted from one part of the body to another.

The increased incidence of leukemia and brain tumors in individuals exposed to high power lines, and the greater occurrences of birth defects in children of women using electric blankets during pregnancy suggest a direct effect of these miniscule stimuli on cell growth. However, such weak electrical and even ultrasound energies can also be employed to speed the healing of bone fractures and purposeful regeneration of soft tissue that has been injured. The electrical potential of the regenerating salamander is negative. The frog, which is fairly closely related, cannot regenerate because the potential is positive. However, if you reverse the electrical potential to negative, it can regenerate, and this can also be partially demonstrated in the rat.

In addition to influences on cell growth, such subtle energies can also have powerful effects on the central nervous system. If the normal polarity of the DC current across the brain of the salamander is reversed, it will go into a state of sleep. Conversely, an anesthetized salamander will awaken when its normal polarity across the brain is restored. There appear to be a series of electrical current circulatory circuits, and these are further influenced by magnetic forces. It is possible to produce anesthesia by properly orienting the salamander in an applied magnetic field. In humans, it has also been shown that the production of a faint magnetic field in the region of the hypothalamus delivered by means of an electrode applied to the roof of the mouth for only 15 to 20 minutes, 3 times a week, can provide significant benefits in insomnia. Similar results can be achieved using sensitive auditory and photic signals. Weak cranioelectrical stimulation has been shown to be effective in the treatment of depression and marked reduction of withdrawal symptoms in patients with substance abuse problems. These observations cannot be explained in terms of neuroendocrine and immune system activities, and further support of the existence of a more direct influence that has primitive origins.

I believe that there are receptor sites on the walls of cell membranes for such extremely subtle energies that can explain such phenomena. It is further proposed that weak electrical energies generated in the brain by powerful emotions and feelings may exert effects on cell growth by direct communication through such pathways. What we record on the EEG is not merely the "noise of the brain", but probably an important and heretofore unappreciated signaling mechanism that exerts its influences throughout the body through some heretofore unappreciated electrical circulatory system. We may very well be in the midst of a significant medical revolution that requires looking at communications in the body at a physical/atomic level, rather than the current chemical/molecular model. Such a paradigm could also help to explain the widely acknowledged, but poorly understood beneficial effects of placebos, the laying on of hands, therapeutic touch, meditation, acupuncture, as well as spontaneous remission in cancer and certain parapsychological phenomena.

Good health, and life itself, depends on the maintenance of homeostasis, or “the steady state”. That can only be achieved by good communication between the various constituent components of the body with each other, as well as with the external environment. Prompt and effective communication is essential for the preservation of health when homeostasis is upset by changes due to stress. That is achieved primarily by cooperative and corrective responses involving the central nervous system, and endocrine and immune system activities. It now appears likely that there may also be weak electrical circulatory circuits that regulate energy homeostasis through pathways not yet delineated. Stress is difficult to define in objective terms, since what is distressful for one individual may actually prove pleasurable for another. However, clinical as well as experimental experience confirm that the sense or feeling of “being out of control” is always distressful. This also happens to be the best definition of a cancer cell; a cell that is out of control. That is because the cancer cell does not communicate with adjacent healthy cells. Is it not possible that the development of a strong faith or positive attitude engenders a feeling of emotional or mental control, and that this message somehow filters down to cancer cells through energy communication pathways?

All of the great integrating and coordinating mechanisms of the body are self-regulating because of built in balancing influences. If distress can cause cancer then it is likely that there are other emotions, attitudes, or feelings that exert opposite effects. Numerous reports of the benefits of meditation, hypnosis, developing a strong social support system, positive and aggressive attitude, and other stress reduction activities that foster a sense of control seem to support this. Although such observations do not provide the type of proof required by the scientific community, this does not negate their validity. There is, however, a real danger that attempts to profit from interest in such approaches that are worthless, may obscure authentic and legitimate efforts to uncover the secrets of subtle energy activities. This new revolution in medical thinking may be more significant than anything since Descartes. It provides the potential for scientifically verifying Eastern approaches to medicine that have stood the test of time, but not scientific scrutiny, as well as a variety of parapsychological observations. It also suggests that we are on the threshold of learning how to stimulate, simulate or emulate the wisdom of the body and the “vis medicatrix naturae”, and tapping into the vast, innate potential for self healing that resides in all of us.

