Why Integrative Medicine and the Philosophy of Traditional Healing Systems Can Save the US Healthcare System

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• Status of the US healthcare system
  • Cost/quality
  • Opioid crisis
  • Payment

• Integrative medicine and health
  • Principles and practices
  • Research and evidence
  • Implementation

Status of the US Healthcare System
Current Status

- ‘Crisis’, #1 election issue
  - High cost
Current Status

• ‘Crisis’, #1 election issue

• High cost
  • Sub par quality
Current Status

• ‘Crisis’, #1 election issue
• High cost
• Sub par quality
• Consumer dissatisfaction

Consumer Dissatisfaction
West Health and Gallup study, 2019, qualitative interviews with consumers and healthcare industry experts, plus survey with 3,537 randomly selected adults:

• Americans express great concern about healthcare costs
  • 45% concerned that major health event will lead to bankruptcy
  • 77% concerned about significant and lasting damage to US economy
• Healthcare costs lack transparency
  • 47% do not know what the ER visit will cost before receiving care
  • 41% did not go to the ER due to cost in past 12 months
• Americans can’t afford to make good health a priority
  • Americans borrowed $88 Billion in past 12 months to pay for healthcare
  • 65 Million adults did not seek treatment due to cost in past 12 months
Current Status

- ‘Crisis’, #1 election issue
- High cost
- Sub par quality
- Consumer dissatisfaction
  - Opioid crisis (pain in America)

Pain in America

- ~100 Million Americans are burdened by chronic pain
- Costs ~560-635 Billion annually
  - More than the **COMBINED** cost of diabetes, heart disease and cancer
- Will increase in the future due to aging population
Opioid Crisis

• Dramatic increase in overdose deaths
• 130 deaths/day
• High impact on unemployed and disabled workers in economically devastated industrial communities
  • Disproportionate effect on middle class whites in non-urban areas
  • Between 2007-14 opioid dependence rose by 3,203% among privately insured patients in these communities
Opioid Crisis – a US Issue

- As 4.6% of the world's population, the US consumes 80% of the world's opioid supply, 99% of global hydrocodone supply.
- The US prescribes 50 times more opioids than the rest of the world combined.
- Even with prescribed opioids, 70% of patients still complain of moderate to severe pain post-operatively.

Current Status

- 'Crisis', #1 election issue.
- High cost.
- Sub par quality.
- Consumer dissatisfaction.
- Opioid crisis.
- Perverse incentives (payment system).
US Health Insurance

- Medicaid – low socioeconomic population (~17% of the insured US population)
  - Households with incomes up to 138% of the federal poverty level can qualify ($16,394 a year for an individual or $33,534 for a family of four). Children up to age 6 and pregnant women qualify with income up to 160% of the FPL ($38,880 for a family of four).

- Medicare – seniors (~18% of the insured US population)
  - Age 65 and paid Medicare taxes for >10 years.

- Private insurance (~66% of the insured US population)
  - (~91% of the population has insurance)
  - Discrimination against government insured patients

Fee For Service vs Value Based Reimbursement

- Fee for service – payment based on individual services delivered
  - ↑ intervention = ↑ profit
  - ~75% of revenue

- Value based reimbursement – payment based on quality of services delivered
  - ↑ quality = ↑ profit
  - Increased through the ACA (Obamacare)
  - Improve quality, lower costs
  - Incentive for prevention and wellness (especially capitation and bundled payment models)

Current Status

- 'Crisis', #1 election issue

- High cost
- Sub par quality
- Consumer dissatisfaction
- Opioid crisis
- Perverse incentives
- Critical mass of research evidence for effectiveness of integrative medicine, along with growing payment based incentive and consumer demand
Integrative Medicine and Health

• Complementary and Alternative medicine (CAM)
• Complementary and integrative health (CIH)
• Traditional and complementary medicine
• Integrative medicine
• Integrative healthcare

What is Integrative Medicine?
Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health [https://imconsortium.org]

Integrative medicine and health reaffirms the importance of the relationship between practitioner and patient, focuses on the whole person, is informed by evidence, and makes use of all appropriate therapeutic and lifestyle approaches, healthcare professionals and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing.
Integrative medicine is an approach to care that puts the patient at the center and addresses the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual and environmental influences that affect a person’s health. Employing a personalized strategy that considers the patient’s unique conditions, needs and circumstances, it uses the most appropriate interventions from an array of scientific disciplines to heal illness and disease and help people regain and maintain optimum health.

• The patient and practitioner are partners in the healing process.
• All factors that influence health, wellness and disease are taken into consideration, including body, mind, spirit and community.
• Providers use all healing sciences to facilitate the body's innate healing response.
• Effective interventions that are natural and less invasive are used whenever possible.
• Good medicine is based in good science. It is inquiry driven and open to new paradigms.
• Alongside the concept of treatment, the broader concepts of health promotion and the prevention of illness are paramount.
• The care is personalized to best address the individual’s unique conditions, needs and circumstances.
• Practitioners of integrative medicine exemplify its principles and commit themselves to self-exploration and self-development.
Disciplines/Practitioners/Therapies

- The five licensed CIH professions
  - Chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, naturopathy, midwifery
- Integrative physicians, functional medicine doctors
- Family and social medicine (primary care) predominantly
- Holistic nursing
- Natural products – supplements, herbs, probiotics
- Movement therapies - Yoga, Tai Chi, Qi Gong
- Meditation
- Health coaching
- Nutrition/special diets
- Emerging - Reiki, reflexology, homeopathy, aromatherapy

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH)

NIH Funding for CIH Research
Evidence-Based Medicine: Hierarchy of Evidence

Systematic Reviews
Randomized Controlled Trials
Cohort Studies
Case-Control Studies
Case Series, Case Reports
Editorials, Expert Opinion
Addressing US Healthcare Issues

- Prevention/wellness
  85% of US healthcare costs are associated with chronic lifestyle based preventable conditions.
- Patient empowerment/responsibility
  Improved patient satisfaction and quality of life
- Mind-body – address psycho-emotional aspects of illness
- Safer/significantly less side effects
- Improve health of healthcare practitioners
  Physician burnout affects 60% of doctors
- Lower cost
  As indicted by cost effectiveness studies

Dissemination and Implementation?
When is an intervention ready for implementation?

Ongoing Challenges

- More cost effectiveness studies
- Payment
  - ↑ Private insurance coverage
  - ↑ Value based reimbursement
  - Medicare coverage
- Education of other healthcare providers
  - Follow best practice guidelines based on current research evidence
  - How and where to refer
Veterans Administration

Largest healthcare system in the world
- 322,030 FT healthcare professionals and support staff
- 1,255 healthcare facilities
Established the Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation
Whole Health model - considers the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental influences in Veterans’ lives
Move away from ‘find and fix’ disease care to one guided by the individual needs of the Veterans
Implemented five prioritized CIH therapies – yoga, chiropractic, acupuncture, meditation and Tai Chi

VA Whole Health Model
Thank You
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