Research is about plunging into ambiguity. There is a real problem when we skim over it. This skimming might occur with systematic reviews if the reviewer is not careful, knowledgeable or committed regarding the subject. "The bias of research writers is seldom expressed. It is not seen as necessary or scientific – if one is following a rigorous enough method. However the bias comes through. In the Jordan article’s first sentence, acupuncture is dismissively referred to as a "panacea" – a term no acupuncturist would use. This sets the tone for the rest of the article.

"The author was also unfamiliar with Chinese research practices. For example, until very recently the Chinese forsook randomized controlled trials as unethical. In a society with pressing healthcare and economic challenges, RCTs seemed wasteful and depriving patients of needed treatment. They sought instead to do both research and effective healthcare simultaneously with a type of outcome study monitoring. (The categories of judging treatment success, along with total lack of randomization were probably the two biggest flaws with this approach.) While some significant clinical work was accomplished over decades, it was written off as bad form. As a result, the populations with the most extensive experience with acupuncture were written off by the analyzer.

"The author’s final conclusion is problematic. He observes: 'After 33 years of active research..., the evidence is just not there to support acupuncture as a central treatment for opiate or any other addiction.' The key issue is ‘central.’ NADA founding president Michael O. Smith constantly reminds us that the NADA protocol was never intended as a stand-alone treatment for addiction. Also, Traditional Chinese Medicine sees chronic diseases like addictions as incredibly complex, and therefore requiring multiple treatment modalities. Western approaches, in contrast, are fascinated with one-pointed (reductionist) understanding.

"Practitioners should know that in any area that is researched enough, the conclusions will be mixed, contradictory or two-sided. Such is the nature of reality, as yin-yang dialectic shows. The trick is to read between the lines. Another question is: What were the characteristics of the positive studies compared to the negative ones? This question is seldom dealt with, and was not here in this article.

"NADA practitioners should learn how to understand research language when talking to allied healthcare practitioners. Enthusiasm generated from direct clinical experience needs to be tempered with research-speak: ‘more research is needed; acupuncture as adjunctive therapy for addictions has possibilities...’ etc."


NADA’s Mission
The National Acupuncture Detoxification Association is an educational, not for profit, tax-exempt corporation supporting education and training in a specific auricular acupuncture protocol within comprehensive addiction treatment programs to relieve suffering during detoxification, prevent relapse and support recovery. NADA strives to make acupuncture-based, barrier-free addiction treatment accessible to all communities and to ensure its integration with other treatment modalities.

GUIDEPONTS: News From NADA is published six times per year for members. Annual dues of $65 (US funds) includes subscription and other benefits. Publication contents may be reproduced without permission (please give credit). Contact: NADA, PO Box 1927, Vancouver WA 98668-1927. USA. Phone: (360) 254-0186. Fax: (360) 260-8620. Web: www.Acudetox.com
President: Ken Carter Editor: Jay Renaud Art Director: Mary Renaud Staff Writer: Mary Ann Petersen Research Consultant: Roger Lore
ISSN 1070-8200

SPIRITUAL continued from page 12

The February 19 issue of Newsweek had a major illustrated feature highly skeptical of the existing “rehab” industry which it sees as mainly benefiting celebrities who want to disappear for awhile or to get back in the good graces of their public. The lead paragraph starts out: “The time is coming – perhaps even within the decade – when doctors will treat alcoholism with a pill.”

Even Science News, a staid weekly bulletin aimed at school teachers, showed a lurid picture of a syringe on its February 10 cover with the headline: “Shooting Down Addictions: vaccines against drugs, smoking, obesity”.

While ever-growing scientific evidence indicates that a key component of recovery is involvement in 12 Step or similar activities, no governmental campaign blares out this news. No government funding leverage presses the treatment industry toward maximization of this existing (and cheap) resource for recovery. And NADA programs, which offer a bio-physical treatment (also cheap) boosting the spiritual resources of the addiction patient, continue to exist on minimal funding and the wits of their staffers.

Instead we see an ever-increasing flood of federal subsidy to the drug companies. In big trouble with Wall Street because of their “blockbuster” blunders (Vioxx, et al), big Pharma scrambles for new molecules to fill its famous pipeline to profit. Thus the endless parade of press releases about pills, cocktails and vaccines to cure all the nation’s unhealthy substance use.

Maybe some of these concoctions will actually play a constructive role in the recovery process. But anyone acquainted with the history of addiction treatment, or indeed that of any chronic, behaviorally mediated medical condition, will be dubious. Whether it’s diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, schizophrenia, or —
many others, chemotherapy of any kind can never be the whole answer.

Addiction medicine, until now at least, has been way ahead of other chronic disease disciplines in giving acknowledgement to the spiritual aspects of chronic disease management and treatment. One example: effective pharmaceutical and other bio-physical and behavioral treatments have long existed for diabetes, but many diabetic patients do not comply with their care regime. This is despite the dire likely consequences of this neglect. But there is no existing, independent social structure, such as the 12 Step movement, to aid diabetics in grappling with how (and why!) to live with a chronic illness.

Because of the Pharma hype, the "general public" cannot be blamed for concluding that a "cure" for addiction is just around the corner. This delusion can only result in apathy toward the real needs of addiction patients. Citizen apathy is quickly detectable by funding officials who must respond to whichever wheel happens to be squeaking most loudly.

Register Now
For NADA Conference 2007
Use Registration Form on Page 8
or
Phone 1 (888) 765-NADA

feel the difference...
CARBO® Acupuncture Needles

1-877-248-4539
www.acpmedical.com
Editorial —
SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF TREATMENT UNDER ATTACK?

Be careful what you pray for - - you might get it! This admonition, familiar to members of 12 Step groups, may now be seen as applying to the traditional addiction recovery movement itself.

For decades, pro-treatment advocates agitated for recognition of alcoholism and drug addiction as diseases - like any other. Against the concept of addiction as a symptom of an underlying psychiatric disorder, or some type of character flaw, these advocates stressed its bio-physical basis and its large genetic component.

Social and medical establishment resistance to recovery movement ideas persisted long after the accumulating evidence had tipped strongly to the pro-disease position. Even so, those favoring the pro-disease concept continued their struggle. They believed a true understanding of addiction etiology would lead to compassion and appropriate care instead of stigma and neglect.

The paradigm finally shifted, as signaled by the National Institute on Drug Abuse slogan “addiction is a brain disease”. But the expected payoff failed to appear. While the new fashion acknowledged the fundamentally physiological basis of addiction, much as the 12 Step movement had been doing for half a century, it left out the equally important spiritual side of recovery.

There was no declaration of vindication of all those who had opened their arms to the addict patient. Instead, the suddenly converted powers-that-be embraced the pharmaceutical industry. “If it is a disease, there must be a pill for it,” seemed to be the new mantra. Now, when addiction issues make it into the major media, the angle is either bad little rich girls hiding out in a luxury treatment center, or what is the latest chemical cure for addiction.

S P I R I T U A L  continues on page 10

National Acupuncture Detoxification Association
PO Box 1927
Vancouver, WA 98668-1927

GUIDEPOINTS:
News from NADA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

In This Issue:
NADA Faces Yin Test — 1
Becoming the Lotus — 2
Headsratching on Merger — 4
NADA Gains in Peru — 6
Research Misses the Points — 7
Will Big Pharma Rule? — 12