

Nutrition & Mental Health

The Quarterly Newsletter of the International Schizophrenia Foundation

40 YEARS OF HOPE
ISF
Summer 2003

OUR NAME HAS CHANGED, OUR MISSION CONTINUES

We are very pleased to announce with this issue of *N&MH* that the Canadian Schizophrenia Foundation has officially changed its name to the International Schizophrenia Foundation. Through the *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine*, published by the CSF, which reaches over 30 countries, and with the creation of the International Society for Orthomolecular Medicine in 1994, we have become truly world-wide in our affiliations and influence. Last Autumn, our membership voted unanimously in favour of the name change, and it has now been ratified by the Canadian Government. Also, we are now recognized as a charitable organization by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States and have been granted 501 (c) (3) status, allowing us to issue tax-deductible receipts for donations from our supporters there. Our head office will remain in Toronto, Canada, from which we will continue our work in improving the prevention and treatment of schizophrenia and other mental disorders.

REPORT ON THE 32ND NUTRITIONAL MEDICINE TODAY CONFERENCE

Despite being held in Toronto during the first wave of the SARS hysteria, our *Nutritional Medicine Today* Conference, April 10-13, was very successful. Delegates from 10 countries enjoyed two and a half days of superb education. This year's conference was true to our roots, to offer hope to those whom conventional psychiatry sees as hopeless. Here is a look at five of the 14 distinguished speakers whose talks focused on the mental health aspects of orthomolecular medicine.

Hyla Cass, M.D.

Dr. Cass, a professor of psychiatry at UCLA and author of many health books, returned to our conference this year to present, *Natural Chemistry for Mind, Mood and Behaviour*. Drawing on her extensive clinical experience in treating anxiety and depression, she spoke of her approach to treating these dysfunctions with

diet, vitamins, amino acids and herbs. Dr. Cass discussed the importance of diet and supplements in neurotransmitter synthesis and how insulin resistance, fatty acid deficits, protein composition and vitamins need to be addressed as a whole for optimal brain chemistry. Of the vitamins critical to neurotransmitter synthesis, vitamin B₆ and B₁₂ are most crucial in transamination and methylation reactions in the brain. Minerals can also be overlooked as a factor in depression and Dr. Cass gave the example of iron deficiency which has been recently shown to be a factor in learning disabilities in children and depression in the elderly.

In treating depression, Dr. Cass uses both blood and urine amino acid tests to determine deficiencies, and supplemental tyrosine or DL-phenylalanine are often used to boost neurotransmitter production. SAME is another important nutrient which she has found to be highly ef-

fective in her practice. There are over 200 studies showing the safety and efficacy of this naturally occurring substance and it has the added advantage of safety and rapid onset. St John's Wort is an herb that Dr. Cass literally "wrote the book on" and she describes its value in patients presenting with PMS, insomnia and moderate depression. Like SAME, St. John's Wort is very well tolerated and, along with amino acids such as GABA, works well to calm anxiety disorders. In closing, Dr. Cass described her Vitamin Relief USA Project, an interesting program which distributes a daily supplement consisting of RDA levels of vitamins to at-risk children. The program involves over 10,000 children so far, and despite the modest dosages, parents and teachers report increased attention and learning and less disruptive behaviour. The high compliance shows that children themselves feel better when their biochemistry is naturally balanced.

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Joan Mathews-Larson, PhD

Joan Mathews-Larson's story was compelling—a personal tragedy turned into a lifelong orthomolecular mission. When her family was still very young, her husband suddenly died of a heart attack and her teen son, in his grief, descended into alcohol and drug addiction. Enrolled in the standard 12-step, behavioural addiction program, her son did not seem to respond and after a time committed suicide. This tragedy set Joan on a course to find a truly effective therapy—one that considered the whole body/mind aspects of addiction. Flashing forward 22 years, Joan is currently the director of the Health Recovery Center in Minnesota, which uses innovative orthomolecular treatments for alcoholism and addiction. Dr. Mathews-Larson spoke of the physical differences between the biochemistry of alcoholics and that of non-alcoholics. Many alcoholics, metabolize alcohol at half the rate of the rest

of the population. The resulting excess of acetylaldehydes can combine with neurotransmitters and interact with the brain's opioid system which mediates pain and reward systems. In such people, drinking has a far different effect, it energizes the body, increases pleasure and simply makes them feel normal. Larson said there are “born alcoholics” who inherit such biochemical vulnerabilities.

The method used at the HRC is the antithesis of the 12-step model. Rather, it is based on the idea of physical repair for a physical disease. Dr. Mathews-Larson described the various alcoholic types, the most common being “allergic” reactors, followed by prostaglandin E₁ deficient alcoholism and pyrroluric biochemistries. Because of the many distinct biochemical signatures in addiction and alcoholism, extensive laboratory work is of prime importance. If patients undergo a pro-

gram of biochemical repair and rigorously rely on a diet specified by their particular lab work, long-term recoveries of 75% are possible. These successes are a far cry from the 10% recoveries in other programs. Dr. Mathews-Larson concluded with her impassioned belief that talk therapy can't change molecular destiny, and orthomolecular renewal is the correct way to conquer addictions.

Klaus Wenzel, M.D.

From the European perspective, Klaus Wenzel spoke about his orthomolecular therapies for cerebrovascular and

Nitrous oxide is essential for maintaining circulation and cerebral oxygen flow and mitochondrial energy production pathways.

As an orthomolecular practitioner, Dr. Wenzel maintains that diet is the first principle in maintaining health, and attention must be paid to the right ratios of protein to carbohydrate and fat; a program of regular moderate exercise; and restricting caloric intake. Supplementation is meant simply to fine tune a naturally healthful lifestyle. Dr. Wenzel closed with several of his case histories which emphasized the importance of tak-

ing a careful patient history to facilitate the biochemical “detective work” the clinician must do to solve the riddle of patient's illnesses

Patrick Holford

In his highly persuasive and energetic style, Patrick Holford from the UK is a vital contributor to orthomolecular medicine. At this year's conference, Patrick

gave a lecture and followed up with a workshop based on his *Optimal Nutrition for the Mind* program. A student of Pfeiffer, Pauling and Hoffer, Holford was a co-founder of the *Institute of Optimum Nutrition* which brought orthomolecular medicine to a new generation in Britain. His current project is equally ambitious—the recreation the new *Brain-Bio Centre*.

Holford describes himself as a developer of concepts, and in this talk he introduced the idea of the “chemistry of connection,” an intriguing way of seeing orthomolecular medicine as an optimizer of mental health. In Holford's view, we are born intimately connected in body, mind and spirit. Yet, the stress and materialism of modern life scatter the body-mind nexus toward disconnection and ill health. Holford's concept of wholeness has many parallels in the literature, from Maslow's confluent hierarchy of needs to



The 32nd Annual International Conference at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto

neurodegenerative diseases. Dr. Wenzel draws upon a rich experience from his busy clinical practice in central Germany and being well-versed in the latest research, he incorporates new ideas into practical therapies. He emphasized the importance of considering neurodegeneration as more than simply the result of free radical damage. Other equally important factors include excessive homocysteine, advanced glycosylated end products, and impaired energy metabolism. Dr. Wenzel discussed the many possible bioenergetic blocks which lead to conditions which mimic dementia. In such cases the cell's mitochondria is the primary therapeutic focus and nutrients such as CoQ10, lipoic acid, niacin, iron and copper play key roles. Dr. Wenzel also places importance on the body's endogenous nitrous oxide system and its modulation by supplementation with the amino acid, arginine.

the Brazilian philosopher, Oscar Ichazo's imagery of a body-mind reality composed of pelvic, abdominal, thoracic, cranial, and dorsal "cavities." In physiology as well, it has long been known that we have three brains, the "reptilian" brainstem controlling autonomic functions, a thinking, feeling cerebrum and the complex neocortex, the intellectual and spiritual "seat of the soul." Holford states that the human proclivity for mystical states, and the use of hallucinogenic plants in ritual and meditation, all have the effect of unifying—if temporarily—the disconnected state of our material being. It was this line of inquiry which allowed Holford to conjecture that if natural molecules such as psilocybin have the chemistry to reconnect parts to a higher consciousness and wholeness, might any of the many orthomolecular substances also share some of the chemistry of connection? These natural substrates may, in the right combinations, promote more gently an optimal reconnection of mind. To this end, Holford has researched substances such as trimethyl-glycine, folate, B₆ and zinc and their roles in methylation and neurotransmitter synthesis. Other substances such as pyroglutamate and DMAE work on the cholinergic system, associated with rewarding and motivating behaviour.

Holford went on to describe his development of a supplement called "Connect," a blend of 5-HTP, trimethyl-glycine, B vitamins, kava and scelletium. This is his attempt to create a synergistic, reconnecting supplement for the mind. He described some of the

first results with patients, where 80-90% report increased alertness and concentration, improved mood, and general well being. All told, Holford's talk was an interesting demonstration of how concept-driven therapies can be created for an optimal mental functioning as well as for specific disorders.

Gary Vickar, M.D.

Direct from the orthomolecular front in Missouri, Gary Vickar, a full-time orthomolecular psychiatrist, made no pretensions to being a member of "the academic world of research" but nevertheless was an engaging speaker who drew from the laboratory of observation in his clinical practice. The title of his talk, *Modern Approaches to Schizophrenia*, got him to thinking that the very phrase is a misnomer. We do have some newer drug therapies such as Clozapine which seem to work slightly better on more negative symptoms, but they bring their own disadvantages of cost, weight gain and tardive dyskinesia. What he has found really new, however, is that patients today are more proactive, more aware of how nutrition affects their well being.

Regarding our conference, Dr. Vickar thought it vitally important that orthomolecular medicine be considered as a philosophy in its totality. One often hears of some medical specialty that suddenly sees the light and co-opts the "right molecule" for a particular disease, but medicine as a whole doesn't see health as being bound intimately to nature, a view that Linus Pauling elucidated so well.

Empiricism—the observation of one's patients—is one such cornerstone of orthomolecular medicine. In tardive dyskinesia, for example, Dr. Vickar recalled that pioneering orthomolecular practitioners in the 1970s simply used vitamins based on their experience of efficacy, and B₃ and B₆ and vitamin E were usually among that group. They realized at some point in their combined experience that TD was exceedingly rare and that high B₆ intake was the likely reason. Moving ahead decades to 2001, we read of a double-blind placebo controlled study showing high doses of B₆ as an effective prophylactic for TD. The impetus of this study surely came from those valuable early reports. As well, dementia diagnoses today are often accompanied by testing for B₁₂ and folic acid, another example where value was placed on an early orthomolecular observation. Dr. Vickar notes that despite these successes, official prejudice is still rampant. Yet, time is on our side and ultimately it will be patients who will drive these effective therapies toward mainstream acceptance.

After this year's milestone conference, we can look back through three and a half decades and be proud of our role as progenitor of what today seems almost common sense. Despite the passing of the some of our founding members—Linus Pauling, Carl Pfeiffer, and most recently, David Horrobin—the current generation, as exemplified by the presenters at the 32nd *Nutritional Medicine Today* Conference, assures the future of orthomolecular medicine.

—Greg Schilhab

85 GALA DINNER CELEBRATES DR. HOFFER AND THE CSF

Two important numbers converge in 2003 as we mark the 85th year of Abram Hoffer and the 35th anniversary of the Canadian Schizophrenia Foundation (now the International Schizophrenia Foundation). Friends, family, colleagues, patients and NMT Conference delegates gathered in the beautiful Ballroom of the Fairmont Royal York Hotel on the evening of April 12 to honour the pioneering founder of the CSF. Hosted by Steven Carter, the festivities included a multi-



Dr. Hoffer accepts a standing ovation, lead by Julie Hilton (right). For more photos, please visit the news section of our website, www.orthomed.org

media presentation of photos from past decades and tributes to Dr. Hoffer by Jack Kay (CSF Chair), Hugh Riordan, George Tamari, Andrew Saul, Brad Weeks, Stephen Lawson, Gert Schuitemaker, Gary Vickar, Julie Hilton and an especially warm and entertaining reminiscence from Miriam Hoffer. Greetings and appreciations came in from around the world for this wonderful pioneer, leader, innovator, mentor, healer and friend. Many thanks to the evening's sponsors Seroyal International and greens+.

The Mind Game

by Phillip Day

Creedence Publications, Kent, UK
Softcover. 462 pages

Phillip Day is a British researcher and writer on politics and health issues whose new book, *The Mind Game*, explores the historical roots of our current mental illness epidemic and social disintegration, offering an orthomolecular solution to bring the population to mental health, naturally.

In the first part of *The Mind Game*, Day leads us through the many social and political upheavals of the last 200 years, which resulted in the erosion of a God-centered universe to one based in man-the-individual. Most people with an historical perspective will agree with his assertion, but Day attempts to spin this social erosion into a rather dubious conspiracy theory. Illuminati, Masons, Nazis, Marxists, Zionists, Darwin, Freud, the CIA—just name your evil conspirator, and it has probably been woven into the fold, pulling the strings to create a New World Order of docile citizenry.

Day gives a valuable overview of the historical roots of psychiatry and psychology, whose theories supplanted the religious view of man and redefined how we see ourselves. These new doctrines now dominate our legal, medical, social and educational institutions with profound effects. Day demonstrates how easily the psychiatric profession has been co-opted by dictatorships in this century and used to suppress dissent and “cleanse” society of undesirables. Day rightly exposes some of the “innovations” of psychiatry like ECT, the chemical straitjackets of neuroleptic drugs and the pseudo-scientific experiments in psychosurgery. This sec-

tion closes with the question: Bereft of God’s centrality in society, how can we survive psychiatry and the modern mental health system?

In the second part of the book, Day asks if mental illness really exists, or could it be that many physical disorders have mental symptoms. There are the examples of the effects of hypoglycemia on anxiety, of pellagra on schizophrenia, and the pyrollurias on mental symptoms. Dyslexia, autism, Alzheimer’s, schizophrenia, and other “mental” disorders may need wholesale redefinitions for effective treatments to be accepted in the mainstream. *The Mind Game* draws heavily on orthomolecular research to show how certain illnesses can be prevented or regressed using nutrition, vitamin and cognitive therapies. The nu-

tritional chapters of *The Mind Game* cover orthomolecular fundamentals such as hypoglycemia, allergies, food intolerance, trace mineral excesses and acid/alkaline balance, all issues intimately tied to mental health.

Many short chapters are devoted to natural treatments for autism, schizophrenia and depression for a which a whole host of standard drugs would normally be used. Regarding addictions, Day describes a simple program of self-help along with nutritional therapies to assist in vanquishing one of the most ubiquitous mental health problems in our society.

There are many options for the new epidemic of Alzheimer’s disease facing our ag-

ing population. Day cites research that shows how the simple addition of the vitamins B₁₂ and folate to the diet of everyone over 50, along with brain-stimulating activities such as reading, games and learning, would likely lower the risk or rate of progression of age-related dementias. Day ends the book with a very comprehensive guide to nutritional supplements including some of the newer “smart nutrients” such as DMAE, Bacopa and Huperzine.

The Mind Game is an unusual book, full of valuable information, but not without its idiosyncrasies. An obvious dichotomy exists between the rise in mental illness which is blamed on the corrosive effects of modernism—a distinctly psychological effect—and the biochemical solution offered to address that social malaise. Perhaps it’s the feeling that Day’s *The Mind Game* might have been better as two separate books, rather than a syncretist attempt to herd every historical villain, social trend, humanist folly and psychiatric abuse under the conspiratorial Big Top. Despite the strengths of its parts, this far-right summation is not necessarily shared by the majority.

—Greg Schilhab



from the Medical Post



“Your diet is so bad, this was the smallest vitamin I could find that could possibly help you.”