

Psychoneuroimmunology - The Mind-Body Connection

Our thoughts, feelings and mind are all connected with our immune, nervous and hormonal systems.

If all of the spontaneous recoveries weren't categorized as "medical miracles" or "misdiagnoses", medical science might recognize the existence of another dimension. Medical science would then be able to incorporate the wisdom of the heart and strength of the spirit, and in doing so become more complete and powerful.

The science that studies the mind-body connection is called Psycho-Neuro-Immunology (PNI). This newly emerging field of study focuses on the series of neural pathways interconnecting the brain, and endocrine and immune systems. These pathways are felt to constitute a communication network between the mind and body that enables them to influence each other.

PNI has shown that the hormonal system is the connector between that which we call the spirit and the physical. This connection can be shown on both the molecular and cellular levels.

There has been a considerable amount of research which has studied the interactions between various factors – personality traits, bereavement, isolation, marital status, support networks – and the onset and outcome of many illnesses including heart disease and cancer. In addition to the research at the psycho-social level, there is now a growing body of published evidence which documents at the biochemical and even molecular level, how and to what extent, states of mind such as anxiety, depression and anger affect the functioning of immune cells – T-cells, B-cells, natural killer cells, and macrophages.

It is important to note that not all stress or pain is negative. At the correct levels, which are completely individual, stress can be a positive force that motivates change, creativity or discovery of self-ability.

Naturopathic Medicine's holistic approach to restoring health and wellness incorporates PSI as one of many tools for patients with specific ailments or those interested in increasing their overall quality of life. Each patient is a unique individual and so programs are developed on an individual basis.