



AskTheInternetTherapist.com Newsletter July 2004

Featured Article

Prescription Drugs Alone Will Not Cure Depression/Anxiety **by William Nelson, NMD**

Americans are suffering from depression and anxiety disorders at an alarming rate. At any one time, almost 40 million Americans have one or both conditions. While both men and women suffer from depression and experience the same symptoms, women are disproportionately affected by depression, experiencing it at roughly twice the rate of men. Men with clinical depression are more than twice as likely to develop coronary artery disease, which is the leading cause of death in the US. In 2002, global sales for prescription antidepressants reached \$17 billion.

Depression and anxiety disorders can be particularly attributed to a chemical imbalance known as Neurotransmitter Deficiency Disorder (NDD). People with NDD can also suffer from one or more of the following conditions: obesity, depression, bulimia, anorexia, anxiety, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, insomnia, attention deficit, learning disorders, panic attacks, migraines, PMS, menopausal symptoms, irritable bowel and many more.

Neurotransmitters (NTs) are essential chemical messengers that regulate brain and muscle, nerve and organ function. The most common neurotransmitters are serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, epinephrine, GABA, histamine and acetylcholine. Low levels of these important chemicals are extremely common in the general public due to poor lifestyle and diet. This article is intended to help the reader determine whether they may be deficient in neurotransmitters and how evaluation and treatment can help.

Conventional treatment uses selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor (SSRI) drugs such as Zoloft, Prozac, etc. which can offer patients symptomatic relief. They work by redistributing serotonin from inside the nerve cell to the synapse where it transmits its chemical message. This artificial redistribution allows for chemical messages to be sent

even though the total body NT levels are low.

The problem with approach is that these drugs DO NOT increase serotonin levels and in fact further depletes NTs. SSRI class drugs cause an increase activity of an enzyme called MAO which breaks down serotonin. It is common for people to experience only temporary improvement due to this effect. The increased MAO activity depletes serotonin until there is not enough for the drug to act on. Conventional research supports this model even though most doctors prescribing these drugs are not aware of this fact.

This is a classic example of a conventional medical treatment that helps with the symptoms but makes the true cause of a condition worse. This approach can be compared with smashing a fire alarm with a sledge hammer because the noise hurts your ears. Your ears stop hurting but the fire is smoldering.

A clinical example of this phenomenon is common to patients on anti-depressant medications. They start on a drug and they feel significant improvement. This can last for months or years until the drug loses its effect. The doctor then suggests taking a drug holiday or prescribes a new prescription and the pattern is repeated.

A symptom questionnaire combined with a simple neurotransmitter urine test is the most effective way to detect a NT deficiency. Many well intentioned doctors are prescribing SSRI drugs, but don't perform this test to monitor or direct proper treatment.

Neurotransmitters levels can be restored using amino acid therapy. Amino acids are obtained from dietary protein, but not in adequate levels to correct even a moderate NT deficiency. Supplements used in treatment may include 5HTP, tyrosine, DMAE, DLPA, Cysteine, GABA, methionine, mucuna (herbal L-dopa), herbals, and vitamin/mineral cofactors. Once a urine test has identified the NT deficiency, and individualized formulation is given to help replenish the low level NTs.

It takes anywhere from 2 to 18 months or more to restore the NT levels using this approach. Patients that have taken amphetamines, SSRIs, or psychotropics Rx drugs or recreational drugs such as crystal meth and Ecstasy have been found to take longer to respond to therapy. The amino acid supplements are safe and have a side effect profile equal to placebo.

The amino acids are safe when used alone or in combination with prescription drugs. Many conventional and alternative doctors tell patients to never combine amino acids with prescriptions because it is dangerous. In thousands of patient visits using this approach, there have been no problems using them concurrently. Patients that weren't getting good results with their SSRIs get great results using this approach. once the

symptoms resolve, most patients can slowly wean off their prescription.

After measuring the NT levels to establish a baseline, amino acid therapy is broken down into three phases. Phase one or conditioning increases serotonin levels to prepare the body for the therapeutic stage. This usually takes two weeks. Phase two is the actual therapy that rebuilds both serotonin and dopamine, norepinephrine and epinephrine. Therapy can take anywhere from 2 months to 2 years. Phase three is maintenance whereby supplements are reduced to simply replace the daily NT depletion rate. 90% of patients with this condition will need to stay on a low maintenance dose to avoid the return of symptoms.

The recommendation for patients with symptoms of NDD as well as anyone on prescription antidepressants is to have their neurotransmitter levels evaluated and optimized. Current research and clinical work in this area is an incredibly exciting and promising for doctors treating these conditions and patients suffering from them.

William Nelson, NMD

Featured Counselor: Dr. William Nelson, NMD

Please welcome one of our newest professionals that joined the site.

Dr. William Nelson, NMD Naturopathic Medicine



William Nelson, NMD is not your typical doctor. He is a Naturopathic Medical Doctor uniquely trained in both conventional and alternative medicine. Although, Dr. Nelson is dedicated to using time-honored natural therapies, he also has the ability to offer prescription drugs when necessary.

This approach is very effective with patients with anxiety and depression who would like to try natural medicine or for those currently on prescription drugs such as Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft or Celexa and would like to wean themselves off their medication.

Dr. Nelson firmly believes that the symptoms of pain and disease are merely a message from the body. This message is a plea to the patient to take notice of the major imbalance(s) in their life. Healing can and will occur when the patient commits the time and energy to uncover these imbalances and correct them. This involves:

1. Identifying and reducing the key biochemical, structural, and emotional stressors that are blocking your healing.
2. Replacing the nutritional building blocks required to restore function to the weakened or diseased systems.
3. Being patient and persistent enough to allow the natural healing process to occur instead of looking for a simplistic “quick fix” with a natural “green drug” or prescription pharmaceutical.

These are key distinctions that differentiate alternative and conventional approaches. Conventional medicine is focused on diagnosing and then treating the disease with drugs. Usually the patient is only expected to take their medication and report back to the doctor. The problem with this approach is that the proper medication can effectively reduce the symptoms, but it does not change the underlying cause.

Improving your health naturally is a shared responsibility between the doctor and the patient. The doctor's job is to educate and coach the patient to incorporate the basic health fundamentals. They are: 1. a healthy diet (free from sugar, processed foods, food allergens, caffeine, excessive carbohydrates and unhealthy fried foods and fats). 2. proper exercise and 3. healthy lifestyle habits and stress management. Once the patient has made these changes, the natural therapies provided by the doctor will have a much greater positive effect.

Dr. Nelson has been blessed with the two most amazing little girls (ages 5 and 9) that any father could wish for. Bright blue eyes, blonde hair... beautiful kids Renoir would've loved to paint. I recharge my mental, emotional, and physical energy by spending time outdoors. I love to rock climb, mountain bike, ski, camp, hike and play golf. These activities insure that I am at my best when people are seeking my care.

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http://www.asktheinternettherapist.com/naturopathic_medicine_nelson.asp

July Contest Winner

Congratulations to Patricia G. He is our June 2004 winner and she picked the Sleep – Forest Tape. Enjoy Patricia G.

Featured Product

Choosing Health

by Dr. Mark Force



Dr. Mark Force, an eminent chiropractor, acupuncturist, and nutritionist, has written a definitive guide to health, "Choosing Health". Not only is this guide knowledgeable and complete but is meant to be a self-help guide to health. Dr. Force believes strongly that the general public has the knowledge to be and the desire to be a partner in their own medical health.

You can find this book at Dr. Mark Force's website. [The Elements of Health](http://www.theelementsofhealth.com) at www.theelementsofhealth.com.

Special Note

As you have already seen, all of our videos are digitally re-mastered and are available on VHS and DVD. Although we still have some of the old videos, which we are selling for \$25.00 each to make room for more of the new, digitally re-mastered ones. They are available at the price above only by calling 1-800-881-7693 and placing an order over the phone. **Hurry before they are all gone!** (This offer is available only for the Love Addiction, Communication Assertiveness, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Chemical Dependence, Co-dependence, and Dysfunctional Families videos).

Be sure to utilize our **free** discussion boards. These forums are formatted by the following special topics- Hypnosis, Chemical Dependence, Co-Dependence, Parenting, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder, Medical Issues, Dysfunctional Families, Attention Deficit Disorder, Relationships, Veterinary Concerns, and Depression. You might find useful information in the various topics

As you are probably aware asktheinternettherapist offers online individual paid appointment times for in depth assistance with any of our professionals. Our discussion groups however are visited from time to time by our staff and their comments to discussions or questions are provided free of charge. This is an added benefit in addition to client self-help that makes up the bulk of the discussion group traffic. Visit soon.

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*We believe better health
begins with better Mental Health.*
Jef Gazley M.S.
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