Introduction to Functional Medicine

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Disclosures

- None
Overview

• What is functional medicine?
• Evidence that supports a functional approach to chronic disease management
• Simple ways to start integrating functional medicine into a busy practice
• Opportunities for further learning
FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE
A systems-oriented, patient-centered approach that aims to address the underlying causes of chronic disease, and that engages both the patient and practitioner in a therapeutic partnership.
In 2008 the US spent 16.2% of its GDP ($2.3 trillion) on Healthcare.

More than national defense, homeland security, education, and welfare…combined.

133 million Americans live with at least one chronic disease…
Heart Disease: 81 million people
Cancer: 11 million people
Depression: 1 in 20 Americans >12 years of age
Diabetes: One in every 3 children born today will develop diabetes during their lifetime

75% of all healthcare costs are due to chronic conditions
The root cause of chronic disease

• Primary driver is the interaction of:
  – Genes
  – Lifestyle
  – Environment

• The greatest health threats now arise from how we live, work, eat, play, and move.
Current Paradigm

• A specialist for every organ system, and “a pill for every ill”
  • Psychiatrist, pulmonologist, allergist, neurologist, and gastroenterologist
• “Name it, blame it, tame it”
• Lifestyle/environmental inputs not consistently addressed
• Akin to pouring water on the fire from the front, while pouring gasoline on the fire from behind
Functional Medicine Paradigm

• Patient-centered, rather than disease-centered
• Acknowledge biochemical diversity and individuality
• Address genetic, lifestyle, and environmental determinants of health
• Health as a positive vitality, not simply the absence of disease
Antecedents, Triggers, and Mediators

- Nutrition
- Environmental Toxicity
- Fragmented families and communities
- Indoor Living
- Aging Population
- Poverty/Uninsured
- Chronic Stress
- Sedentary Lifestyle

Chronic Disease
Organizing the patient's story: Antecedents, Triggers, and Mediators (ATMs)

- **Antecedents** are factors, genetic or acquired, that predispose an individual to an illness or pattern of disease.

- **Triggers** are factors that provoke the symptoms and signs of illness.

- **Mediators** are factors, biochemical or psychosocial, that contribute to ongoing pathological changes and dysfunctional responses.
One Condition: Many Imbalances

- Inflammation
- Hormones
- Genetics and Epigenetics
- Diet and Exercise
- Mood Disorders

One Imbalance: Many Conditions

- Inflammation
  - Heart Disease
  - Depression
  - Arthritis
  - Cancer
  - Diabetes
Two Questions:

• Does this person need to be RID of something (toxic, allergic, infectious, poor diet, stress)?

• Does this person need to GET something – an unmet individual need required for optimal function (nutritional deficiency)?
Seeking the root cause: what to RID and GET

- RID the 5 most common causes of illness:
  - Poor nutrition, allergens, infections, toxins, and stress
- GET
  - Nutritious food, balanced hormones, clean environment (air, light, water), regular movement, love, meaning
Evidence for functional medicine

- Evidence base supporting the benefits of:
  - Nutrition
  - Exercise
  - Stress management
  - Detoxification
  - Mind/Body techniques
  - Manual Medicine
  - Acupuncture
Evidence for functional medicine

- Autoimmune disease
  - Often not diagnosed until multiple symptom and laboratory criteria are met
  - Many patients begin experiencing symptoms 5 or more years before diagnosis
  - Triad of factors leading to autoimmunity (Fasano 2011)
    - Genetic susceptibility
    - Molecular bio-mimicry
    - Increased intestinal permeability
Functional Medicine in Practice

• Expanded H&P focusing on lifestyle and environmental inputs
• Determination of antecedents, triggers, and mediators
• Targeted lab testing
• Multi-factorial intervention(s) personalized for the patient
Seven organizing systems

- Assimilation (e.g., digestion, absorption, microbiota/gi, respiration)
- Defense and repair (e.g., immune, inflammation, infection/microbiota)
- Energy (e.g., energy regulation, mitochondrial function)
- Biotransformation and elimination (e.g., toxicity, detoxification)
- Transport (e.g., cardiovascular, lymphatic system)
- Communication (e.g., endocrine, neurotransmitters, immune messengers)
- Structural integrity (e.g., from subcellular membranes to musculoskeletal structure)
What to do on Monday morning?
• Ask:
  “When was the last time you felt well?”
  (look for triggers/mediators)
• **Ask about lifestyle**
  - Diet, movement, stress, sleep, relationships
  - Have the patient keep a symptom diary
Exercise and Staying in Motion...
Fight and Flight
Healthy Relationships
• *Think about:*
  - What is the root cause driving this patient’s chronic illness?
  - Could poor nutrition, allergens, lack of movement, infections, lack of sleep, toxins, and/or stress be contributing?
Take more time…if possible

• Bill for time
• Prolonged service codes when applicable (99354, 99355)
• More frequent visits when actively addressing lifestyle issues
Next Steps…

functionalmedicine.org/FreeCourse