

# cam

February

2007

Vol. 6 Issue 7 £6

the magazine for complementary and alternative medicine professionals

# Stress and IBS: the mind-body solution

**Nutritional  
strategies  
for autoimmune  
diseases**

**10 years on:  
the boom in CAM  
degrees**

**From student to  
practitioner:  
how they did it**

**PLUS:**

**Put your practice  
on the Net**

**Learning  
Zone: your  
free 24-page  
education  
supplement**



**Excellence in  
education: the  
Total CAM Show**

# ISHTA SPINAL TOUCH – CORE ALIGNMENT: A WAY TO HELP SPINAL HEALTH

Ishta Spinal Touch - Core Alignment looks at the integrity and health of the spine and the general wellness of the person. It is a tool for you to assess the level of postural distortion seen in the spine, pelvis and throughout the whole body, explain chiropractors Sue Weller and Allyn Edwards, who teach the technique in the UK.

Some practitioners may be familiar with Hans Selye's model of stress (1). When a person is subjected to a stressor the body goes into the alarm stage of the stress response. The first thing that happens is that the sympathetic nervous system, located in the intermediolateral tract of the spinal cord, is initiated. The sympathetic nervous system directly affects visceral function via neuronal control of the organs. As a result all catabolic activities are increased (eg heart rate and blood pressure) and all anabolic activities are decreased (eg digestion, growth, cellular immunity, sex glands). The sympathetic nervous system sends a message directly to the adrenal glands; unusually it doesn't need to synapse at the sympathetic chain ganglia, which means that the response is speeded up. This is a good evolutionary response when we are in times of danger. Also, it shows the direct link the spine has with the stress responses of the body which is paramount when studying the health of the spine and the person.

If the stressors are not present for too long, and there are not too many at any one time, the body recovers from the alarm stage and returns to a state of homeostasis. We can say that the body is reacting within its elastic limits. However, when a stressor is prolonged, or a number of stressors are present at the same time, the body goes beyond being able to return to a homeostatic balance after the stressor is removed. It goes beyond its elastic limits and enters the adaptive stage of the stress response known as strain. In this stage of chronic strain the body does a wonderful job of adapting and adopts a new state of balance known as allostasis. What we are seeing in allostasis is chronic changes to the demands upon, and the subsequent function of, the cells. In other words the body sets a new homeostatic set point for these variables that matches the perceived environmental demand (2).

The result of these chronic changes to our physiology leads to a decrease in the pH of the body (acidosis) and an incomplete breakdown of the products of oxidation. The latter then become deposited in the body tissues, including the muscles. With the increased deposition of these toxins over time the muscle cells begin to change in texture and shape, which can lead to a

distortion of the musculoskeletal structure and posture (3).

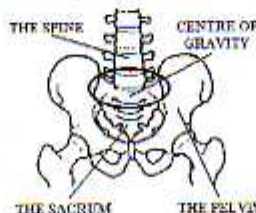
## INVOLVEMENT OF THE SPINE IN THE STRESS RESPONSE

Research to support the spine's involvement in the stress response comes from neurophysiologists, and neuropsychologists (2). The latest research on the role of movement and proprioception in the homeostatic regulation of whole-body physiology via connections between mechanoreceptors, the cerebellum and the areas of the brain for the regulation of the organs, the stress response, cognition, emotion and movement, balance and coordination is amazing (2).

The global affects of changes to the centre of gravity, and therefore the whole of the spine, result in decreased movement around the spinal joints which in turn leads to increased nociceptive input, or negative body messages, and decreased proprioceptive input, or positive body messages (4). Most of these messages are subconscious or asymptomatic. The negative body messages stimulate the parts of the brain associated with the stress relay centre, the locus, and the stress and anxiety centre, the amygdala; and these in turn stimulate the adrenals. Decreased positive body messages lead to decreased stimulation of the body mind's integration and homeostasis centre, the cerebellum; the learning centre, the hippocampus; the sensory centre of the organs, the solitary nerve; and the motor centre of the organs, the vagus nerve (5). The result of all of this is the improper homeostatic control of movement, balance, coordination, stress hormone levels, cognition and learning, emotions, organ function, and the immune system. Finally on this point, more than 50% of all neurons for proprioception in the spinal cord charge the brain battery, therefore decreased proprioception leads to decreased energy for the brain. All this as a result of poor spinal health!

Ishta Spinal Touch trains therapists to measure the postural changes of the spine and the postural muscles using a plumbline.

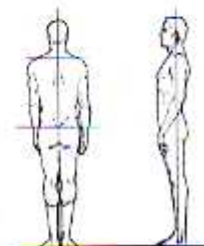
According to Drs Hurley and Sanders, the founders of the forerunner to Spinal Touch, the body's centre of gravity, the L5/S1



junction, is the most accurate area of the body to assess for postural distortion (6).

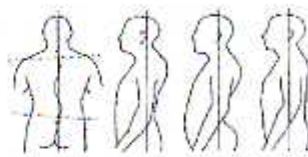
In a body that is not distorted, and therefore in a physiological efficient posture, the centre of gravity is in the correct relationship to its counterweight, the third sacral segment.

With the centre of gravity and the counterweight in balance a person would appear upright when assessed at a plumbline which would bisect them in two equally left to right. They would be weight bearing evenly on both feet, their shoulders and hips would appear level and from the side they would have anatomically correct spinal curves.



*Ideal posture*

What we actually see at the plumbline can be a combination of: an anterior hip and the plumbline drifting to the right or to the left of the spine, uneven shoulders and hips with a scoliosis, and from the side the person can be leaning forward, have anterior head carriage, and the spinal curves are either accentuated or lost.



*Degrees of postural distortion*

Once we have assessed the level of postural distortion we are able to determine what is required to improve the posture. In Ishta Spinal Touch this involves a series of very light and precise "rub-outs" over the postural muscles, beginning at the buttocks and working up to the cranial base; whilst the centre of gravity is held in its physiologically correct relationship with the counterweight, this is known as an alignment. An alignment is usually found to be a very relaxing experience and some patients fall asleep. During an alignment the body begins to correct the postural distortion, increasing proprioception. This results in a decrease in the stress response and allows the tissues to dump some of the toxic waste stored

Continued on page 10 ►

## ► Continued from page 8...

in them. The mind-body begins to return towards homeostasis. We monitor this by observing a change in the posture at the plumbline.

1. The Stress of Life. Hans Selye. Publisher: McGraw-Hill; 2 edition (March 1978)
2. The 14 foundational premises for the scientific and philosophical validation of chiropractic wellness paradigm. James L. Chestnut BEd., MSc, DC (2003): [www.thewellnesspractice.com/wellness-products.html](http://www.thewellnesspractice.com/wellness-products.html)
3. The Encyclopedia of the Spinal Touch: Treatment. Dr W. LaMar Rosquist, DC Publisher: American Press (1990)
4. Seaman, D.R. Dysafferentation: a novel term to describe the neuropathophysiological effects of joint complex dysfunction. A look at likely mechanisms of symptom generation. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* 1998; 21 (4)
5. Schahmann, J.D. The Cerebellum and Cognition. *International Review of Neurobiology*. Academic Press, London. 1997, Vol. 41, p.p.367-386
6. Aquarian-Age Healing for You. Dr. J. Hurley and Dr. H. Sanders, Publisher: Health Research (1983)
7. Troyanovich et al. Structural rehabilitation of the spine and posture: Rationale for treatment beyond resolution of symptoms. *Journal Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* 1998; 21(1):37-50
8. The Neurophysics of Human Behaviour, M. E. Furlan and F.P. Gallo, Publisher: CRC; 1st edition (June 2000)

\* To Nosce offers post graduate and lay training in lahta Spinal Touch - Core Alignment. It is taught by two Chiropractors, Sue Weller and Alyn Edwards, who, after their initial training in the US in 1998, were so amazed with the results that they have been teaching the technique ever since. They were trained by Dr LaMar Rosquist, the developer of Spinal Touch, and are authorised trainers of the technique. For more information, or a course prospectus, telephone 01785 616409 or go to [www.spinaltouch.com](http://www.spinaltouch.com)

### Taking bodywork skills to the next level

Quantum Metta School of Massage runs courses in Holistic Massage, Sports Massage, Aromatherapy, Thai Yoga Massage and Indian Head Massage and has add-on skill modules from diplomas to one-day CPD events including Effective Stretching, Deep Tissue Massage, Postural Assessment, Soft Tissue Release and even a Dissection Day.

The teaching at QM is based on accelerated learning principles, and the school also organizes networking events for practitioners.

\* Next Networking for Therapists event is on 28 February 2007 - [www.networking4therapists.com](http://www.networking4therapists.com). Quantum Metta, School of Traditional Thai Yoga Massage, Holistic Massage, Aromatherapy and Sports Massage. P.O. Box 43176, London E17 5WG. Tel/Fax 020 8527 5024, [enquiries@quantummetta.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@quantummetta.co.uk), [www.quantummetta.co.uk](http://www.quantummetta.co.uk)

### Teaching eyesight improvement

The College of Vision Education trains teachers in the well-established Bates Method of natural eyesight improvement.

The College now has two training strands. One enables practitioners to receive the College Diploma and become qualified Bates teachers in 12 months, while the other is a shorter option for individuals who want to improve their own vision using the Bates Method. Main focus of the training is on practical experience of the classical techniques of Dr William H. Bates (1860-1931) taught in an up-to-date way. The course starts with an introductory six-day residential, designed to meet the needs of both groups. The teacher training course continues with two 6-day residential and 10 non-residential weekends.

Graduates will be eligible to apply for membership of the Bates Association for Vision Education.

#### Why Natural Vision Education?

Dr Bates contended that mental and physical strain in the form of unconscious, tense vision habits and a bored, strained mind is the true cause of vision problems. He also maintained that if eyesight could worsen it could improve. He firmly believed that the use of corrective lenses contributed to eyesight deterioration.

The Method is becoming an increasingly popular alternative to glasses, contact lenses and laser techniques. Bates teachers are not optometrists, and as such do not diagnose or prescribe for treatment of eye problems. Clients with eye problems are encouraged to seek such services from their medical eye specialist.

The co-founders and principal teachers of the CVE are practising Bates Teachers with many years of experience both as teachers and trainers of teachers.

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

## BUILDING MOMENTUM: A CAREER IN CHINESE MEDICINE

The move from student to practitioner is often the biggest step anyone trained in CAM has to take. The London College of Traditional Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (LCTA) has a proven system for enabling newly-qualified practitioners to succeed in practice, as Principal Susanna Dowie explains – with success stories from actual students (see page 12).

Whether you plan to become a practitioner within an established practice, or have ambitions to set up your own clinic; making the first move can be extremely daunting. However, once you've taken the plunge and laid the foundations for a successful business, the work doesn't stop. The skill is in continuing to add the building blocks to grow that business; adapting it and moulding it to meet the needs of your clients and to strengthen, reinforce and firmly establish your place within it.

It takes motivation, hard work and resilience to build a successful business. It also takes a great deal of patience and determination so you need to have a clear vision and understanding of what you are trying to achieve.

The LCTA's 3 Building Blocks of Success are:

1. Groundwork: choosing the right course and getting the right qualifications
2. Drawing up the plans: questions you should ask
3. Laying the foundations: what you should know before you set up your business.

You can read the full text of this article online at [www.cam-mag.com](http://www.cam-mag.com)

\* If you want to find out more about training in Oriental medicine, visit [www.lcta.com](http://www.lcta.com) The next Presentation Day at LCTA is on 24th Feb. Call 020 446 3332 to register your place.