

Aquatic Integration Research Project

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Aquatic Integration and Ayurvedic Pulse Diagnosis

Hypothesis: AI helps bring the body into balance by decreasing the pulse intensity of an imbalance—particularly relaxing the nervous system circuitry and expediting the healing of affected deep tissues. Basically, AI reconnects the mind and body.

Background: The ancient form of Ayurvedic Pulse Diagnosis determines what imbalances are affecting the body and creating discomfort. The idea is to deal with the imbalance and not the symptom. There are three major body types or Doshas, They are:

Vata: Air Aspect. Nervous System—the energy of movement

Pitta: Fire Aspect. Digestive / Metabolic System—the energy of transformation

Kapha: Water Aspect. Physical Body System—the energy of lubrication & structure

Doshas are the principles that govern the body's psychophysiological response and pathological changes. Each of the three has 5 subdoshas that correspond to function and location within different structures of the body.

Most people have a Vata imbalance, particularly the subdosha Prana which is present in the brain and spinal cord. It is the movement of mind, thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations and perception. Too much 'in-the-head' eventually compromises ones awareness of their physical body.

Conclusion: A balanced body heals itself. Aquatic Integration encourages the body to become balanced and reconnects the mind & body.

Plan of action: Taking the pulse prior to and after a session to determine the intensity change of the imbalance and a reconnection to the body.

It's All in Your Mind—Body

Typically, we become aware of our body when it is in state of discomfort or pain. We get disconnected from it due to a very busy mind...thoughts from the past and thinking about the future.

Regardless of what over-thinking yields—our bodies are affected. Researchers have discovered “...a psychosomatic network extending into the body...not just in and near the spinal cord, but all the way out along pathways to internal organs and the very surface of our skin.” (Molecules of Emotion 143) As daily stresses impact us a consequent body tightness and holding pattern develops. For the physical & emotional health of the individual a releasing of stress needs to occur.

A reacquainting to the body is in order. As Drew Leder aptly points out in The Absent Body “...my own bodily state may be the farthest thing from my awareness. I experientially dwell in a world of ideas, paying little heed to my physical sensations or posture.” (Leder 1)

During my research it was not surprising to find that:

All clients indicated a very strong Vata (mind) and weak or absent Kapha (body) pulse at the beginning of the session. Basically, there was no mind and body connection. The degree of pulse intensity showed physically. (The higher the intensity = a tighter, stiffer immobile body & breath holding.)

That is:

The arms were tight and closed inward.

Legs were stick-like appendages.

Neck and shoulders were tight, and the head pushed downward or to the side toward the chest.

Torso was stiff and immobile with jetting ribs.

Chest was slightly sunken and breathing was either very shallow or they were holding it.

When release occurred there were various indications such as; a body shutter, a deep inhale followed by a deep exhale, a relaxation of muscle tissue and mobility. Occasionally sadness or anger would bubble-up and tears followed.

After sessions all indicated an even pulse (all three Doshas were felt) and reduced intensity—usually half. Typically when the intensity reduces so does the imbalance—a healing occurs. “In Ayurveda, body, mind, and consciousness work together in maintaining balance.” (Textbook of Ayurveda 29)

Examples of noteworthy changes in some of the clients:

Client A: Pulse at beginning indicated very strong Vata & Pitta and an absent Kapha. Intensity was 8. Opening of the Thoracic, neck and shoulder blades yielded a dramatic decrease in intensity from 8 to 3. A reconnection to body occurred (Vata & Kapha,) and all three Doshas were evenly felt. Subsequent sessions typically had a decline in intensity which at the start ranged from 8 to 6 lowering to 4 to 2. And, all three Doshas were evenly felt. Essentially the Mind (Vata) and Body (Kapha) were connected.

Client B: Pulse at beginning indicated strong Vata, & Pitta and very low Kapha. Intensity was 8. Lower back release, mid-back realignment and hip ROM movements produced a reduction from 8 to 3. All three Doshas were evenly felt, and the Mind (Vata) and Body (Kapha) were connected.

Client C: Pulse at beginning indicated strong Vata, very strong Pitta and low Kapha. Intensity was 10. Head ROM, side stretching, angel wings, Hara-Heart, and low back release decreased intensity from 10 to 3. All three Doshas were evenly felt. Again, the Mind (Vata) and Body (Kapha) were connected. Client indicated that their sight was slightly clearer and were no longer angry. Subsequent sessions

typically had a decline in intensity which at the start ranged from 8 to 6 lowering to 4 to 3. All three Doshas were evenly felt.

Typically, AI sessions reduced the pulse intensity and reconnected the Body. It seems that the process of moving the body in the water created changes regardless of what movements were used. However, in the case of the above Client A, specific movements (thoracic, neck and shoulder) yielded the best response. That said...one could conjecture that the same could be said for Clients B & C.

Clients noticed how:

Much stress they held in their body.

Certain holding patterns created discomfort or pain (sometimes for decades.)

Holding onto anger, mental trauma and emotional baggage had stressed their entire body.

They felt emotionally lighter and happier.

They credited the changes to the water environment.

David Sawyer writes "...water allow[s] trauma patterns to unwind, but it is also an excellent medium for the repatterning of a healthy sense of self. The flow and grace of the moves lulls the client into a deep state of awareness." (Birthing the Self 1, 26)

According to Dr. Candace Pert, "when stored or blocked emotions are released through touch or other physical methods, there is a clearing of our internal pathways, which we experience as energy."

(Molecules of Emotion 273)

Aquatic Integration could be considered an energetic Entry Point...it opens the body for other modalities to work more efficiently. GYROTONIC® methodology is significantly amplified when AI is part of the regimen. Gyrotonic methodology is a weight bearing, 3-dimensional exercise protocol that gently opens joints and releases restricted muscle tissue while creating more flexibility and balanced muscle structure. It joins Activity to the Facilitation work in AI, similar to the body/mind connection.

For example, a Gyrotonic client with shoulder and ribcage pain (long term holding pattern & injury—30+ years) felt that the area was not getting opened as deeply and quickly as they expected. After a couple of AI sessions the area released and they had a remarkable 4 days without pain indicating that they noticed body changes for the better.

Another example is increased spine flexibility. Again, after two AI sessions a Gyrotonic client, who became aware of how much stress they held in their body, was able to effortlessly and fluidly move their spine.

One can easily say that AI is premier in altering the effects of long term holding patterns and changing the body's dynamics. It could also be considered a source of encouraging the body's innate healing abilities,

Works Cited

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