

# Feature *therapy*

## Craniosacral Therapy

### *Following the Body's Cues*



by Becky Peeling, APR

Upledger Craniosacral Therapy™ is a gentle, hands-on technique that seeks the causes of pain and dysfunction and encourages the body's self-correcting properties. The therapy involves the craniosacral system, which includes the membranes and fluids that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord. The system extends from bones of the skull, face and mouth (which make up the cranium) down to the sacrum or tailbone area.

The original concepts for what is now known as the craniosacral system were put forth by osteopathic physician William Sutherland early this century. His studies culminated into a system of treatment known as cranial osteopathy.

Another osteopath, John E. Upledger, is credited with developing craniosacral therapy. While assisting during a surgery in 1970, he observed a rhythmic movement of the dura mater, the membrane that encompasses the brain and spinal cord, that neither his colleagues nor medical texts could explain.

Dr. Upledger's curiosity led him to the work of Dr. Sutherland and to develop his own scientific studies to confirm the existence of the craniosacral system. This work went on from 1975 to 1983, while he served as a clinical researcher and professor of biomechanics at Michigan State University. The findings of the research team he supervised there first established the scientific basis for the craniosacral system.

Dr. Upledger formed The Upledger Institute in 1985 to educate the public and health care practitioners about the benefits of craniosacral therapy. Widely available in

Canada and the United States, the therapy is growing rapidly and gaining acceptance worldwide.

### **Benefits of Craniosacral Therapy**

Practitioners of craniosacral therapy essentially facilitate the resolution of obstacles that the body's normal, self-correcting forces have been unable to overcome. Rather than deciding how the correction should be made, the therapist follows cues from the body. This gentle approach is extremely safe and effective in most situations.

By enhancing the body's self-healing abilities, craniosacral therapy may alleviate a range of conditions. These include infantile disorders, traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, migraine headaches, chronic fatigue, motor co-ordination impairment, chronic neck and back pain, scoliosis, central nervous system disorders, emotional difficulties, temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ), learning disabilities, stress and tension-related problems, post-traumatic stress disorder and orthopedic problems.

### **Tension Released**

In a typical session the client, dressed in loose clothes without shoes, lies on a table and relaxes while the practitioner evaluates the craniosacral system using about five grams of pressure. The techniques are so subtle it may appear at times that the therapist isn't moving at all. Clients may, however, feel tensions and restrictions release during the session, which generally lasts 30 to 60 minutes.

The effects of craniosacral therapy can occur during the session or hours, even days, later. Most clients report feeling relaxed after the treatment, while some may notice that old discomforts surface as the body self-corrects.

### **Practitioner Training**

Most practitioners are health care workers who study the technique as post-graduate continuing education. They include massage therapists, physical and occupational therapists, osteopaths, physicians, acupuncturists, chiropractors, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists and nurses. Craniosacral therapy is often incorporated with other therapies. Practitioner training is offered across North America. There are six levels of training, each involving four or five days of academic work and hands-on supervised practice, as well as clinical application between levels.

### **Further Information**

*Your Inner Physician and You* by John E. Upledger, DO, OMM, (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, Calif., and The Upledger Institute, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. 1997) describes craniosacral therapy in greater detail. The book is available in stores or through The Upledger Institute.

To locate a craniosacral therapy practitioner, the International Association of Healthcare Practitioners (IAHP) publishes a directory listing clinicians by province, area code, licence and level of training. For details, contact The Upledger Institute at (800) 233-5880, ext. 9396, or (561) 622-4334.



Dr. Krop

## Experts Support Dr. Krop's Methods

Late this past summer, six experts in environmental medicine told the disciplinary committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) that the methods employed by Dr. Jozef Krop are safe, preventive, effective and within acceptable standards of the profession.

Their evidence indicated that thousands of environmental physicians in North America and other countries use the same techniques as Dr. Krop.

Dr. William Rae, founder and director of the world-renowned Environmental Health Centre in Dallas, Texas, informed the panel that environmental physicians have frequently helped patients with complex cases who could not be successfully treated by conventional doctors.

In addition, it was reported that in the United States, standards for environmental medicine have been approved by the American Medical Association. The six charts used to formulate the charges against Dr. Krop were examined by the established American Academy for Environmental Medicine's (AAEM) Peer Review Committee, which concluded that Dr. Krop's standard of practice was acceptable.

There are no recorded standards for the practice of environmental medicine in Ontario. Dr. Krop's practice was assessed for the CPSO by allergists who were not familiar with his field.

The case was scheduled to continue for several days in November, when Dr. Krop will take the stand and several character witnesses will testify on his behalf.

Financial support continues to be critical. Donations may be made to "J. Krop, MD, Legal Defence in Trust" at the Toronto-Dominion Bank, 9019 Bayview Ave., Richmond Hill, Ont. L4B 3M6. For VISA card contributions, call 1-800-352-8127. (Reported for *HEALTH NATURALLY* by Gwenith Whitford)

## Rx Herbs



Herbs and herbal medicines are slowly moving from nature's pharmacy to the control of the pharmaceutical industry.

In one development, manufacturer Wampole Canada is working with the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine on a program to train pharmacists in botanical medicines. The "exploding" herbal market was cited as the reason for the move.

The program, to include a manual, seminars, video materials and information hotline, is scheduled for launch in early 1998.

Elsewhere, California-based company PharmaPrint is preparing to conduct clinical trials on two new proprietary drugs made from the saw palmetto berry and St. John's wort. The herbs are already well-known for their effects on prostate problems and depression, respectively. However, the new products are planned to be available by prescription only.

A developer and manufacturer of patented pharmaceuticals derived from herbs, PharmaPrint aims to introduce 11 new drugs over the next three years. Estimated market value is more than U.S. \$19 billion worldwide. (Company news release, Aug. 5, 1997)

## Ontario Medical Establishment Adopts Complementary Medicine Policy

Faced with impending health freedom legislation in Ontario, the College of Physicians and Surgeons in that province has adopted a policy that appears to recognize the value of complementary medicine. The three-part policy states that:

1. Doctors should be able to refer patients to practitioners of complementary therapies if the doctor believes the referral is appropriate and won't harm the patient.
2. Doctors trained in conventional medicine should become more knowledgeable about complementary medicine.
3. Practitioners of complementary medicine should be regulated to ensure treatments are safe and likely to be effective.

The policy reflects the findings of a college committee that has been deliberating on "alternative, unproven, complementary and unorthodox" therapies for about a year. The College's favourable response was likely influenced by a bill pending in the Ontario legislature that would protect complementary practitioners from misconduct charges.

Although the new policy may ease practitioners' fears somewhat, how it will be applied in practice is still unknown. Some cause for concern can be found in the committee report on which the policy is based.

Besides calling for regulation of practitioners, the report claims the College has not persecuted doctors practising complementary medicine, citing the small number of cases resulting in a verdict of misconduct. At the same time as it released this statement, however, the college continued its longstanding legal harassment of Dr. Jozef Krop (see item above) (*Globe and Mail*, Sept. 23, 1997)