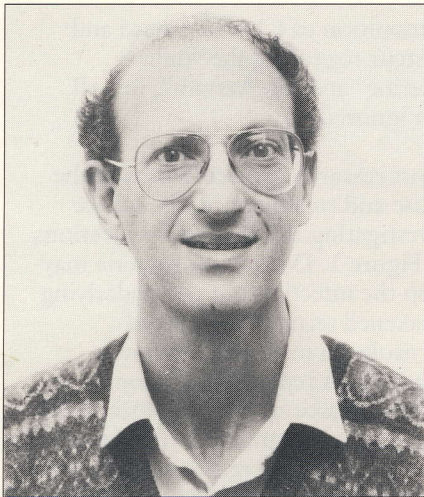


## The Holistic Approach to Medicine – A Viewpoint of Health and Disease

– Dr B Brom



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### Curriculum Vitae

Bernard qualified in 1965 in Cape Town (MBChB) and after 2 years of gastroenterology in Grootte Schuur Hospital, went with his Canadian wife on a trip around the world, starting in Miami, Florida. During this time he developed a strong interest in medicinal plants, and when they returned to the RSA in 1975 he spent much time in the use of biological remedies, acupuncture and the use of low frequency laser: as an acupuncture tool and as laser treatment in its own right. This year (1990) Bernard plans to visit SriLanka to do at least 5 weeks of acupuncture studies and also work in a hospital there (where they treat about 300 patients per day with acupuncture). From there he plans to go on to Singapore for a further 5-6 weeks study under Dr Tee Tong Ang who runs a Nature Cure Institute, hoping to study ECWIO Bio-holographic acupuncture medicine (which is some very recent research coming from China).

Bernard has a particular interest in Bio-energetic medicine and would appreciate contact with other doctors with similar interests.

### Summary

*The author recognizes that a patient is not only ill but has, at the same time, very powerful healing processes at work – and the true doctor should stimulate his patient's natural healing capacity instead of only treating the symptoms. He sees his patient as one "system" where nothing can happen to the body without an influence on the mind, and vice versa. This holistic approach gives a new direction and perspective in understanding disease.*

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### KEYWORDS:

Holistic Health; Physicians,  
Family.

The word holistic in relation to the practise of medicine seems to have acquired a bad name. It is difficult to understand why. Is it because we regard ourselves as less than holistic so that the very word is enough to threaten us? How else is one to practise medicine if not holistically? Perhaps there is confusion between what is required of the general practitioner and what is required of the specialist; and between scientific medicine and the art of medicine.

The specialist by the nature of his work can be forgiven for not being holistic. He is asked to deal only with a particular problem, to make a diagnosis of a possible physical disease and suggest management. His approach is scientific and reductionistic and this is perhaps as it should be. The GP, however, is or should be altogether another breed. He is above all, the artist of medicine, the one who needs to step back and

see his patient in his total environment, not only on the horizontal level (that is the physical dimension, body-environment) but also on the vertical level (body-emotions-mind-spirit).

The specialist uses the biomedical model which is an explanation of functions arising out of the reductionistic mode of thinking. The latter approach is based on the assumption that the whole can be understood by an analysis of its parts. While this approach has certainly led to many advances in medicine, the glamour attached to these advances has tended to hide how little we really know regarding the nature of biological phenomenon, and the process of health and disease.

This is not surprising because when a system is taken apart one no longer has a system but a handful of nuts and bolts, and if one examines those nuts and bolts, what one discovers, is only that which relates to nuts and bolts and which may have no bearing on the way the system really functions as one whole piece.

Professor Kriel (Witwatersrand Medical School) stated in a recent lecture that the biomedical model is no longer adequate for the modern practise of medicine, and that a new model of medicine is urgently needed.

The new model for medicine that is needed is really as old as man himself. The biomedical model with its emphasis on disease has tended to distract us from one simple fact, that healing is a natural process that is going on all the time. The purpose of all the biochemical processes in the body is to maintain a healthy state within the system as a whole. Even in

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a person dying of a terminal disease, healing processes are still going on. A cut will still heal, food is still digested, the Ph of the blood is still maintained within a very narrow range. There is, however, a specific block or weakness (Figure 1. Projection A) to the healing process and in this particular space, disease occurs. Micro organisms may enter into this terrain which is now vulnerable, or cancer cells may grow in this space in which the immune system is compromised.

Claud Bernard, regarded as the father of modern physiology, insisted on the close relationship between the organism and its environment. He referred to the "milieu interior" and felt that the loss of the internal balance within the body due to internal and external factors, was responsible for disease.

Pasteur also recognized the importance of environmental factors

and referred to the "terrain" as important in infectious disease and pointed out that bacteria could cause disease only if the body was weakened in some way. He stated further that successful therapy would depend on the physician's ability to restore the physiological conditions favourable to the natural resistance.

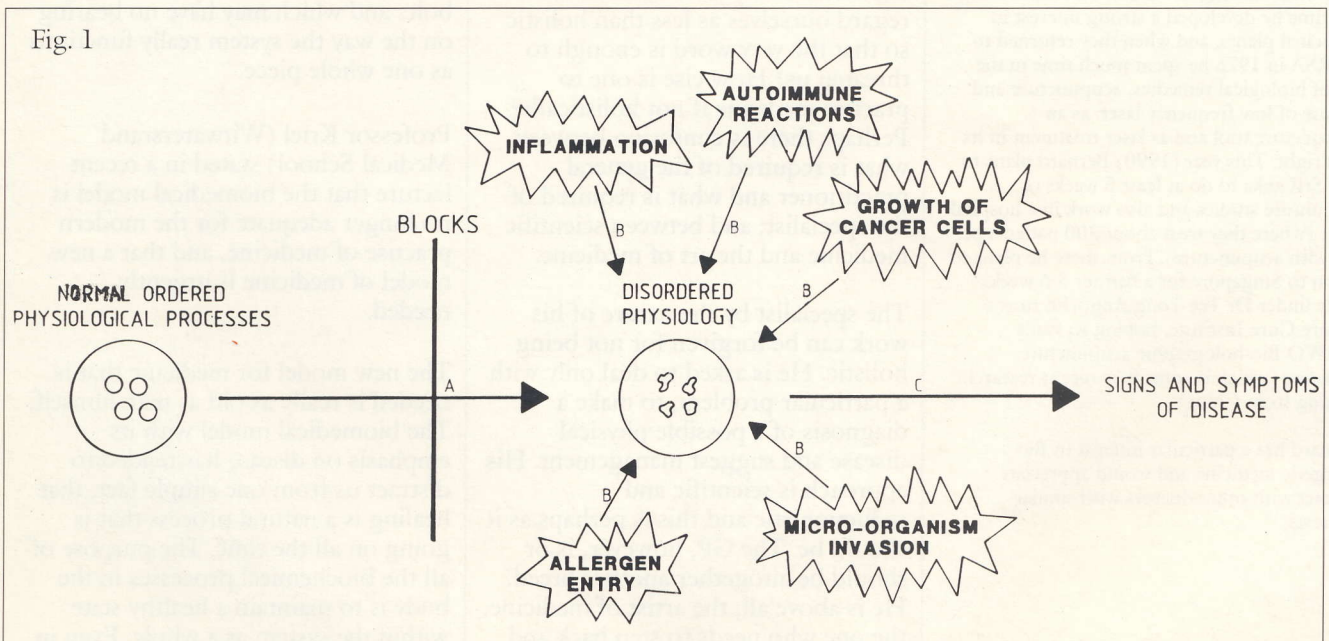
Bacteria can only cause disease if the body-environment is weakened (Pasteur)

The discovery of micro-organisms, however, and the later discovery of antibiotics which, by controlling and destroying the growth of these micro-organisms, was very often able to treat all kinds of infectious diseases, had such a powerful effect on the medical fraternity at the time, that the

admonition of Claud Bernard and Pasteur regarding the "milieu interior" and the "terrain", was all but ignored.

Most research projects aimed at the cause and treatment of disease are investigating the B and C projections in Figure 1. Destroying bacteria may stop the infection but the underlying weakened terrain (disordered physiology) may still be present, resulting in repeated infections, allergic reactions may be blocked, but continuous treatment is required as the susceptibility remains. The local cancer may be removed but recurrences may be the result, not because of the cancer cells left behind, but because the underlying cancerous process, ie the disordered physiology, is still present. One may shut off auto-immune reactions with cortisone, but possibly at the same time, shut off healing mechanisms as well. Pharmaceutical companies invest a great deal of research

Fig. 1



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identifying the physiological pathways leading to the symptoms and signs of disease (see C projection in Figure 1) and by means of chemical agents are able to block the manifestation of the symptoms. The symptoms are thereby often improved, but what is obvious if one looks at the chart, is that the abnormal terrain has not changed. Thus the symptoms improve while the disease process often continues or the susceptibility remains.

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Cortisone may shut-off auto-immune reactions, and most likely the healing mechanisms as well!

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What is obvious to us all, is that the body does have its own innate healing mechanisms. A person with an acute illness is not usually in the process of dying. The most prominent fact of an acute illness is, that despite the person's very obvious discomfort and often an absolute incapacity to do anything for himself, the chances of recovery for the vast majority are excellent, without, and even often despite treatment. The majority of patients with acute illnesses are overtreated or even treated for diseases they don't really have. Drugs add extra blocks to the physiological processes, adding to that already present by the disease process and creating side effects as a result.

In chronic disease too, the person is still very much alive. Despite the breakdown in certain areas of the body's anatomy, a homeostatic mechanism maintaining body functions towards order, is very much in evidence. Disease, maintenance of

normal function and attempts at healing are all present together in the ill person. This point cannot be too strongly emphasized. Even in a very ill patient the least obvious fact and yet the most important one is that healing and homeostatic processes are still maintaining function, still digesting food, maintaining circulation and preventing the body from being completely overrun by viruses and bacteria. Wounds heal, colds and flus clear up and toxins are removed in ill patients as they are in healthy patients. The process may be slower and more inefficient and the patient may even die in the end, but right up to that moment healing and life still continues. Many of the symptoms that the patient complains of are in fact due to the healing process and not the disease.

Infections may be due to the bacteria but the inflammation is part of the healing process and may be responsible for most of the symptoms. The temperature is not the disease, yet many patients are encouraged to use anti-pyretics to bring the temperature down. By doing so we may be interfering with

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... so the symptoms improve while the disease process often continues

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the body's natural healing process by stopping interferon production which is temperature related. Inflammation is also part of a healing process and yet anti-inflammatory drugs are often used to switch off or block this process. It may be true that the inflammatory process may become blocked at times leading to a chronic process but would it not make more sense to remove these

blocks or find ways to encourage the healing process to complete itself. This in fact is what all ancient methods of healing have aimed to do, that is to stimulate the body's natural healing capacity and to remove the blocks to the healing process. (Figure 2).

What is this inner environment and the innate healing potential within the body, and can it be manipulated in any way so as to improve or induce

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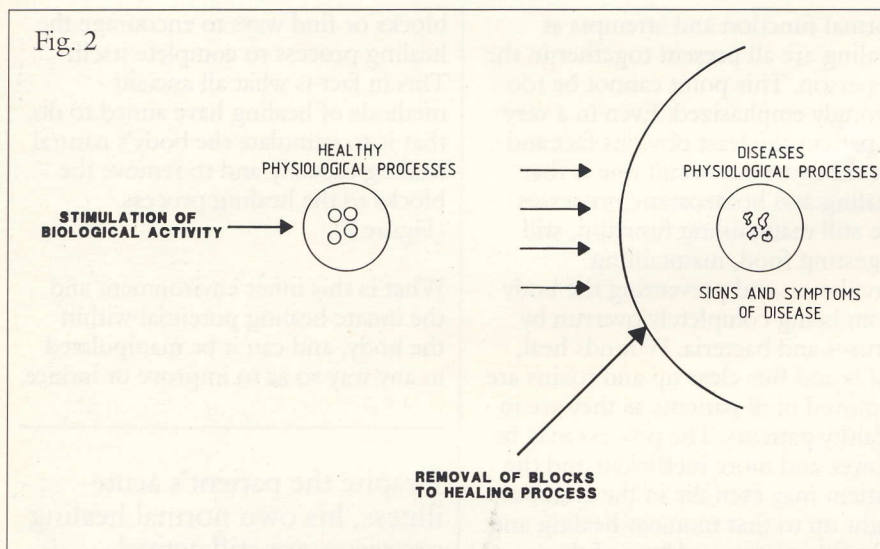
Despite the patient's acute illness, his own normal healing processes are still active!

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a healing process?<sup>2</sup> When grandmother applied a mustard plaster to the chest, or a cold pack, or gave herbs, massaged the feet, onion poultices etc, what was she trying to do? In our modern society man tries always to be in control and there is a tendency to forget how little control we really have over nature and its environment, over the cosmos and even over man himself. When we try and manipulate nature we nearly always end up by being destructive. If we try to control the weather we create problems somewhere else and when we try to block chemical pathways for long periods, we discover years later unexpected side effects. On the other hand, when we try and work in co-operation with nature and assist a more natural flow, there seems to be a greater harmony in the way everything functions.

When man had much less control of his environment than he has now and when he lived much closer to nature, he observed what was going on and recognised a tremendous power and

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energy in the flow of life both around him and even in his own body. This energy or life force was responsible for the growth of the body, the beating of the heart and flow of fluids and chemical processes. 30,000 Chemical processes taking place in each cell per second attest to a most magnificent and co-ordinated processing of this energy throughout the body. The ancient healer with his very deep respect for the movement of this life force which probably had a spiritual meaning for him, was completely focused on attempts to encourage this healing potential which he recognized was functioning

Many of the symptoms that the patient complains of, are in fact due to the healing process

weakly in a diseased condition. This weakness could be due to a block in its flow or deviation of the energy to other areas. Therefore, he attempted

to draw the energy down or up eg with hot or cold compresses, or to remove the blocks eg with acupuncture. The use of herbs, massage, manipulations etc were all attempts to encourage the movement of this energy towards a healing process. (Figure 2).

Is this healing energy or life force something to do with the autonomic system, with hormones, or with the immunological system? Obviously there is movement here, but what triggers the flow of these systems? What governs the flow of growth from fertilization to adulthood? What controls the cyclical flow of hormones between menses and the length of a pregnancy? What is responsible for the onset of menarche and menopause? What controls the orderly arrangement of a healing process when the skin is cut? What determines the shape of the body and all its parts despite the continual turnover of substance. The reductionistic biomedical model that we have developed today cannot really give us an answer to the idea of

life force or life energy because it deals with things. As Professor Kriel pointed out in his recent lecture, Quantum mechanics is showing us a new way of looking at the universe. Mass and energy are related and energy can be examined in its own right, quite apart from its relationship to mass.<sup>3</sup>

Is this life force of the ancients then not a reality, waiting only for science to measure some aspect of it? One obviously can't expect to discover about this energy with biochemical means. Light may be a particle or a wave depending on the means one uses to measure it. To discover something about human energy requires not research by biochemists, but by electronic engineers. Dr Harold Burr,<sup>4</sup> professor of anatomy and neuro-anatomy at Yale University School of Medicine, suggested as a

Inflammation is part of the healing process and is temperature related; don't automatically give an anti-inflammatory; or anti-pyretic to bring the temperature down!

result of his investigations that man and all forms of life are ordered and controlled by electro-dynamic fields (L-fields) which can be measured and mapped with precision. These L-field voltages appear to reflect also mental and emotional states. He published over 80 articles on his investigations. Dr Morell<sup>5</sup> in Germany working together with electronic engineers has measured what he calls an ultrafine vibration and each organ has a particular pattern. His machines both diagnose and treat through electronic means.

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In the department of parapsychology in California is a million dollar piece of electronic equipment which is measuring energetic patterns from the body. All the above research work suggests that changes in these energetic patterns precede changes in the biochemical processes.

If all this is true, then a great deal of information that all of us have, begins to make sense. Emotions and mind (not brain), may be energetic processes of some kind.<sup>3</sup> In the healing of a skin wound the various layers of cells are merely streaming along the energetic pathways according to their particular frequency. The meeting of the sperm and ovum is dependent on a particular resonance effect and is not a haphazard process. The growth and streaming of chemical cellular material is responding to the underlying unfoldment of an energy process which itself is connected to a greater life process which contains the pattern for that unfoldment. If this all sounds a little farfetched to some, then they should read any book on quantum mechanics for the laymen.<sup>6,7</sup> Without an energetic view

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We tend to forget how little control we really have over nature, over our environment, over ourselves!

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of man we will always be limited in our understanding, and will continue to treat disease by blocking biochemical processes and wondering why, to a large extent, this is symptomatic only, and why despite millions of dollars spent on cancer research, very little progress has been made in our ability to cure cancer. An

energetic approach<sup>8,9,10</sup> to the nature of man could very quickly change all that. Our actual experience of man is in fact an energetic one. We do not experience man as a chemical process, but rather as a feeling and thinking and spiritual being. Because science cannot yet measure him in this way does not mean that this does not exist.

The holistic viewpoint therefore, recognizes that the patient is not only ill, but also has very powerful healing processes at work as well and it is towards these processes that he directs his attention. Symptomatic treatment may be necessary and helpful under certain circumstances, but may not always be to the benefit of the patient.

The holistic viewpoint makes no separations between body-mind (spirit) but recognizes it as one system.<sup>11</sup> Nothing can happen in the body without an influence on the mind and nothing can happen in the mind without an influence on the body. Thought must be energetic to influence the body and has subtle, though powerful, influences into the body's processes.<sup>12</sup> Stress is energy raised to such a frequency that it has a negative resonance effect on certain body organs.

These ideas are meant to stimulate interest in looking at man from a different perspective. I do not believe that it is necessary to become a homeopath or a naturopath in order to become holistic. What is required, is merely an open, enquiring mind, a compassionate and attentive attitude and the recognition that a person is not only a chemical, cellular process, but has also energetic components and that these energetic components may eventually give us clues to the

emotional and mind processes and give direction to a new assessment regarding the cause of disease.

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