

Beating Addiction

Dr. Jay M. Holder shows why combining chiropractic, auriculotherapy, amino acids, counselling and 12-step programs may be the groundbreaking answer to all addictions including

alcohol, cocaine, heroin, nicotine, eating disorders, sex and gambling

FROM
BONDAGE
TO
FREEDOM

In the first days of its second century, chiropractic may be a bold, effective, and inexpensive solution to the alarming problem of addictions. An estimated 20% of the U.S. population suffers from some form of addiction and over 80% of all crime is traceable to addictions or substance abuse.

Even more shocking, according to the National Center for Substance Abuse and Treatment, addiction is implicated in 69% of drownings, 68% of manslaughters, 49% of murders, 50% of all traffic fatalities, and 35% of all suicides. Add to this deaths from drug overdose and related substance abuse complications, and you have a health problem of staggering proportions. Chemical dependency can be fatal.

According to Jay M. Holder, D.C., M.D., Ph.D., a Miami Chiropractor, his 103-year-old profession offers help. In practice for 23 years, Dr. Holder was awarded the Albert Schweitzer Prize in Medicine in 1991 for his research in addiction. He directs chiropractic clinics in Miami and Miami Beach, Florida, including the 300-bed Exodus Addiction Treatment Center which he founded, as well as directing the Holder Research Institute.

Several years ago, at the age of 26, a salesman named John came to see Dr. Holder. Depressed, displaying psychotic behavior and strung out on alcohol and cocaine. He'd seen four psychiatrists who had given him different mood-altering drugs, which only worsened his condition. He had started addiction programs

twice, but finished neither and attended Alcoholics Anonymous meetings but quit when he found them “boring.” He’d go off drugs for a few weeks, sometimes several months, then relapse.

John’s future was not promising. His parents refused to pay for further treatment programs, which were costing \$16,000 a month. His insurance company had written him off as hopeless, and any other addictionologist might have recommended more AA meetings and wished him well.

After taking John’s case history, Dr. Holder examined him on the treatment table with a system he developed called Torque Release Technique. Holder was able to tell which vertebrae in John’s spinal column were out of alignment, a condition called “subluxation.” “For chiropractors, a subluxation means a separation from wholeness,” says Dr. Holder. “It interferes with your body’s ability to function in a whole way, which is a form of neurological insult.”

Holder maintains that any addicted person will have a spine with at least one or more vertebrae out of alignment. Using an FDA approved hand-held spinal adjustment instrument he calls the “Integrator”, Holder makes a few chiropractic adjustments during each visit, painlessly administering a minimum of force and pressure.

In addition to correcting John’s misalignments, Dr. Holder started him on a series of four amino acids (precursors or building blocks for the proteins normally found in foods) taken daily as oral supplements. They included DL-phenylalanine (750 mg. 3 times daily), 5-hydroxytryptophan (500 mg. 3 times daily), L-glutamine (750 mg.), and L-tyrosine (500 mg. 3 times daily). Dr. Holder will keep John on this amino acid combination for at least a year into recovery.

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Although according to Dr. Holder’s theory, chiropractic adjustment will remove the interference to the natural flow of brain chemicals, it is still necessary to shore up the body’s supplies of these substances, vital to addiction recovery.

Specifically, the amino acids, especially DL-phenylalanine, the “addiction-treatment king,” will help the brain restore the “brain reward cascade” and the body-wide sense of well-being it induces. By reducing stress and lifting depression, they will help John make important changes in

his behavior and attitude, which are crucial to the success of his treatment program.

In addition, John is attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings every day and receiving expert addiction counseling at least once a week, both of which are provided in Dr. Holder’s Exodus program. He may also receive the auriculotherapy Dr. Holder has developed as an adjunct to treatment.

“We integrate all five modalities for the best results,” Holder explains, “but I emphasize that of all the modalities, the one that offers the greatest benefit for the dollar invested is chiropractic.”

After just one week of treatment with chiropractic and amino acids, John had already begun to improve. His family couldn’t believe the changes in his condition and wanted to know what kind of miracle Dr. Holder had performed.



Left: Dr. Holder performing auriculotherapy; treating ear points with his hand-held microcurrent stimulator, the “Stim Plus Pro.”

Right: Dr. Holder adjusts a patient with the “Integrator,” an FDA approved device he invented that reproduces the hands of a chiropractor to remove misalignment.

“He doesn’t yell or mope anymore,” said John’s mother. “He is more attentive, smiles frequently, even goes to work on time,” said his father. And John said, “I don’t cry at night any more and I no longer dream about my drug.”

Holder wasn’t surprised. He’s seen results like this often with many other addicted people. “Under chiropractic care, they show a remarkable difference compared to any other addiction treatment program. They become open, relaxed and compliant as their anxiety and depression lift. Their heads clear, their thinking improves, they get in touch with their feelings, and they open up to group therapy and the treatment program with a surprising intensity.” A couple of years later when John paid Dr. Holder a visit, he was still off drugs, had gotten married and had never relapsed.

Dr. Holder believes that, technically, there is no cure for addictions. “Once a pickle, never a cucumber,” he says. Addiction treatment experts speak in terms of recovery and the ability to stay off drugs more or less permanently.

The key factor in successful treatment addiction studies shows how long an addicted person will stay in the treatment program. Those who finish a comprehensive program of three months or more, stand an 85% chance of staying drug-free five years later. If you can get people to finish the program, you come as close as possible to “curing” them. Dr. Holder calls it “securing an on-going recovery.”

Auriculotherapy

Classical Chinese medicine describes five ear points which produce beneficial results. However working with new information about the energetics and neurology of the ear, Dr. Holder has identified three new treatment points

for all addictions. These derive from the fact that there are four cranial nerves that have nerve endings throughout the ear.

Dr. Holder practices a form of ear acupuncture that uses a microcurrent rather than

needles with about 20% of his patients.

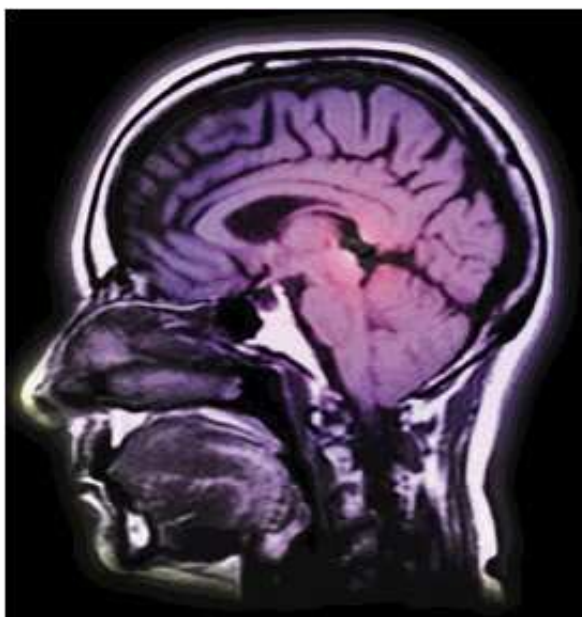
Auriculotherapy helps relax patients, which opens addicted persons to the therapy program and encourages compliance. It also enables them to feel less apathetic and more highly motivated to stay off drugs. It reduces drug cravings and their sense of physical and emotional withdrawal.

Dr Holder also uses a device of his own invention – the StimPlus Pro, which is a small hand-held probe that delivers between five and 20 Hz in microcurrent to specific ear points for 15 to 30 seconds per point. This

compares to needle-delivered ear acupuncture that requires anywhere from 45 to 60 minutes of stimulation. This microcurrent probe is painless, efficient and specific, and helps release the pleasure-producing brain chemicals called endorphins more quickly and thoroughly than needle treatment.

Chiropractic

In a randomized clinical trial with 98 addicts designed by Robert Duncan, Ph.D., biostatistician at the University of Miami School of Medicine, Dr. Holder found that daily chiropractic adjustments five times a week over a 30-day period increased the retention rate to 100%. “This is unheard of; it’s never happened before in addiction treatment,” Dr. Holder says. At a national average of only \$40 per chiropractic adjustment, this rate of success costs only about \$800 per month. Add to this \$50 for a one-month’s supply of amino acids and \$240-\$400 a month for four addiction counseling sessions, and you have a total program cost of



Like falling dominoes, brain chemicals must be released in the right sequence for you to feel a sense of pleasure. If that release, or neurotransmitter “cascade,” is interrupted, you don’t experience enjoyment.

The Brain Reward Cascade

\$1,100 to \$1,250. John's previously unsuccessful treatment, by comparison, cost his family \$16,000 a month.

John's parents saw the results but couldn't understand how chiropractic could have achieved them. Dr. Holder explains, "Simply put, addiction is compulsive use of a chemical or activity in spite of negative consequences." You keep using a substance even though you know it's bad for you. There are five types of addiction, including work, food, sex, drugs, chemicals, and gambling, and each one has many factors. "But these five categories are all variations of one disease – addiction."

According to research reviewed by Dr. Holder, two key factors play a role in causing addictions. First, according to Kenneth Blum, Ph.D., of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, there is genetic cause. Dr. Blum discovered the same genetic flaw (called "the A-1 allele of the D-2 dopamine receptor") in 69% of severe alcoholics compared to only 20% of nonalcoholic people. Blum's treatment, based on 30 years research, involves the use of amino acids to balance the brain reward cascade chemicals (called neurotransmitters) which are chronically deficient in the addicted person.

What's the connection between a misaligned spine and addictions? It has to do with the interruption of a precise sequence of chemical changes in your brain called the "brain reward cascade." If this cascade is not interrupted, you feel a sense of well-being and pleasure. If the sequence is interrupted, resulting in what is known as "reward deficiency syndrome," you may seek mood-altering substances or activities. The brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters must be released in the right sequence, like falling dominoes, for you to feel good.

The biochemical end of the line is the release of dopamine; dopamine reward may be the biochemical secret to understanding addictions.

How does a misalignment in your back interfere with the flow of chemicals in the brain? Holder's theory is that emotions and feelings are

Emotions are not just felt in your head, but in your spine as well.



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If your spine is misaligned anywhere along its length, that condition can interfere with the proper operation of the limbic system and the flow of reward chemicals in your brain. Chiropractic gets the dopamine flowing again, balancing the brain reward cascade. Chiropractic offers the public something that conventional medicine cannot: a drug-free addiction treatment program.

Acupuncturists achieve excellent results in treating addictions but with only 7,000 for a population of 256 million, there are too few to go around. Most conventional doctors cannot successfully treat addictions

because they are inadequately trained and tend to prescribe mood-altering drugs which only replace one substance with another and leave addicts at risk to relapse.

"Chiropractors, who number 50,000 in America today, are the logical primary intervention resource to deal with addiction," says Dr. Holder. How this daring claim plays out in the profession's next one hundred years remains to be seen. But nobody expects recovered addicts to argue the point. **AM**

Editor's Note:

To contact Dr. Holder for referrals to other chiropractors using Torque Release Technique or for information and books about Certified Addiction Training programs, or referrals to certified addiction professionals, call or write to Jay M. Holder, D.C., M.D., Ph.D., American College of Addictionology and Compulsive Disorders, 5990 Bird Rd, Miami, FL, 33155; tel: 1-800-490-7714; fax: 305-538-2204.