

UpClose

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HealthPlex Clinical Services

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HEALING JOURNEY CUTS A PATH THROUGH ALTERNATIVE, TRADITIONAL TERRAIN

Cynthia Gracey is circumspect about her journey toward wellness. "I have often wondered what I would have done if my first serious attempt to address my symptoms of Charcot-Marie-Tooth syndrome with an alternative therapy had NOT worked," Gracey muses. Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT), a hereditary degenerative neuromuscular disease similar to muscular dystrophy, had made her legs weak, walking difficult, and twisted her back and pelvis. Gracey had rejected doctors recommendations for surgery, striving to find other means to improve her health.

Her first foray into what she calls the almost mystical land of holistic healing was a fantastic success. She tried the Rolfing® method, which stabilized her body, and has never had to look back.

Her next great therapeutic bodywork experience was through a nurse at the Muscular Dystrophy Society, who was studying a new form of therapy — CranioSacral Therapy — with its developer Dr. John E. Upledger. Having become a believer that the next step in her healing process would be offered clearly and usually in an unexpected way, Gracey decided to try it.

"While the Rolfing® method helped on a very physical level, CranioSacral Therapy felt like it was going deeper, almost into my emotional and spiritual neurology," she says. "I found it to be like a fine-tuning, encouraging my body, mind and spirit to embrace this body of mine, and to wake up and do the

healing work that was necessary. I experienced an expanded sense of well-being, vitality and joy after a session of CranioSacral Therapy."

Gracey incorporates other bodywork methods, such as hydrotherapy and neuromuscular therapy, into her wellness routine along with weight training, breath work, meditation, imagery and nutrition.

A former attorney, she now devotes her time to her company, PATH consulting, and her family — pursuits that complement her healing philosophy.

"Grace, knowledge, intuition and the need just to do that *something* guided me," Gracey says, who busily supports others in their health quest from her Florida home. "My healing journey, through both alternative and traditional terrain, continues to this day."



Devoting time to her husband, Matthew, and her children complements Cynthia Gracey's

MAGNETS: A CAUSE FOR PAUSE

by John E. Upledger, DO, OMM

Recent discussions about the therapeutic use of magnets bring to mind the story of Madame Marie Curie, who discovered the x-ray. Curie and her husband suffered severe damage to their fingers, which was related to the invisible, ionizing radiation they worked with during their research. They apparently were not aware that their new diagnostic tool, although invisible, could have harmful effects.

The magnetic field, too, is a powerful tool that has been shown to have healing and potentially destructive effects upon living systems. In our eagerness to find new therapeutic methods, I wonder if we may be carried away into the reckless use of magnets based on readily available scientific information.

The effects of artificial magnetic fields on humans became startlingly evident during the early manned space flights. Both United States and Soviet scientists were forced to concede that magnetic fields might have a powerful effect upon human health and ability to function. Subsequent investigations have confirmed that changes in magnet field intensity, vector orientation and polarity exert significant effects on living systems in space.

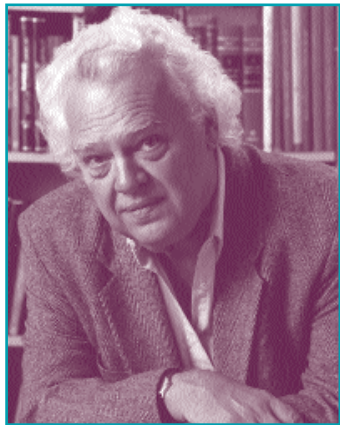
These studies have implications for the earthbound as they refuted several long-held scientific dogmas. For example, one principle held that humans do not have any permanently magnetized materials in their tissues. In fact, the brain contains about five million single domain crystals of magnetite per gram of tissue, and the meningeal membranes contain 100 million of these crystals per gram of tissue. These findings are of particular interest to those working with the craniosacral system. It is possible that the energies perceived by CranioSacral Therapy practitioners as signals of membrane restrictions are related to these magnetite crystals.

The mobilization of the meningeal membranes through CranioSacral Therapy may have a positive effect upon the magnetic aspects of these membranes that is not yet fully understood.

Meanwhile, earth's magnetic fields, which are called geomagnetic fields (GMF), are constantly fluctuating due to both internal and external influences. These fluctuations seem to be self-correcting, so that the natural magnetic fields remain within the limits that make earth habitable. Continental shifts, explosions, earthquakes, variations in the electrical currents of the earth's atmosphere, sun-spots, eclipses, atmospheric pollutants, lightening and thunder storms, hurricanes, and cyclones can influence the GMF.

For a simple example of how we are affected by subtle changes in the earth's magnetic field, we have only to consider what happens during a full-moon phase, when some people may seem somewhat irrational and experience malaise. The earth has an overall positive charge that increases during the full moon. However, most people seem to feel and function better in an abundance of negative ions. It also has been noted that human oxygen consumption goes up during the full moon, and blood and lymph become somewhat less viscous.

The effects of magnetic fields have been observed at a cellular level. A researcher at Cal Tech in Pasadena hypothesizes that individual cells may possess sensory systems that respond to weak magnetic fields. He also noticed that extremely low frequency (ELF) electromagnetic fields change the cellular protein structures, which disrupts the transport of proteins and other substances within the cells. Clearly, disruption of the magnetic field of a cell may ultimately disable it to some degree; it may even cause cell death.



John E. Upledger, DO, OMM

By chance, I came across some startling examples of the effects of magnetic fields on living systems in a book by a farmer named Davis. While I don't remember the title of the book nor the writer's first name, certain of the writer's experiences and observations were unforgettable. Davis and a lawyer friend became curious about the effects of magnets upon crops and farm animals. They decided to divide batches of vegetable seeds into two subbatches, which were exposed either to the north or the south pole of a bar magnet before planting. The men noticed that the seeds exposed to the south pole grew more rapidly, and the plants and the vegetables were much larger than those exposed to the north pole. Davis also described the south-pole vegetables as dry, woody or pithy, and inedible. The north-pole vegetables were smaller but moist, tender and pleasant tasting.

Next, the men exposed a series of fertilized chicken eggs to magnets. North-pole exposed chickens grew more slowly and were smaller at full growth than the south-pole exposed chickens. What really caught Davis' attention though was that the south-pole chickens were very aggressive and would fight to the death. By contrast, the smaller, north-pole chickens were very peaceful. If allowed to mingle, the north-pole chickens were attacked by the others and killed. Subsequent to the killing, the south-pole chickens would pick apart their victims and eat some of their flesh. This latter observation suggests the possibility of hormonal effects by the two poles of the magnet.

It was this book that first piqued my curiosity about magnetic field effects on living systems. Jon Vredevoogd, the co-author of *CranioSacral Therapy* and co-researcher at Michigan State University, and I discovered that we could use magnetic fields to cause and then relieve headaches, nausea and mental confusion. We also found that increases and decreases in craniosacral system pulse amplitude were very much related to changing magnetic fields.

I would suggest, that because human and other living systems appear able to create

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To register or for additional dates, call:

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For more information or to register for special programs, call (561) 622-4706, ext. 9556.

their own permanent magnetic materials, they possess some ability, albeit limited, to modify most external magnetic fields that they encounter toward acceptable levels. It also seems quite reasonable to suppose that long-term exposure to unnatural external magnetic fields might ultimately drain these inherent protective systems of their ability to neutralize and/or satisfactorily modify the effects of these external magnetic fields.

If the body's defenses are unable to neutralize abnormal external magnetic fields, many quite serious things can happen. Magnetic field exposure could lead to distortion in the cellular production of hormones, various cellular dysfunctions and/or, ultimately, cell death.

Externally created magnetic fields also can interfere with normal cellular activity by creating a "static" that interferes with communication between separate cells and between structures within any given cell. This type of exposure also has been seen to interfere with the cell's ability to exclude

disease-causing proteins from entry. Thus, the cell may become more vulnerable to disease-causing invaders, such as viruses and bacteria, as well as to the acceptance of toxic substances.

One researcher exposed cells from mammals to artificially pulsed electro-magnetic fields, and observed the effects on DNA.

The magnet fields caused distortions of the DNA molecules. In view of these observations, I believe extreme care should be exercised to protect pregnant women from unnatural magnetic fields.

My experience, both personally and with patients, has shown that the autonomic nervous system also is very sensitive to changes

in the magnetic fields. Research supports these observations, noting that the long-term use of external magnets can cause autonomic systems to change their set points and require time to readjust once the magnets are removed. These autonomic effects are manifest in episodes of cardiac failure, brain

dysfunction, blood viscosity changes and gastrointestinal problems.

On the bright side, reports are coming in about success with the use of magnets to stimulate nerve growth. I believe that this nerve growth effect may occur, at least partially, because the external field may reactivate magnetic crystals in the nerves. I have only worked with three spinal cord injury patients using magnets for limited periods. All three had secondary paraplegia and sensory loss. In both sensory and motor responses, the magnetic stimulation produced more definite subjective responses than the electrical stimulations.

However, based on the current evidence, I recommend exercising the utmost care and vigilance when using magnets as a long-term treatment. This invisible but very powerful modality is not without risk. At present, it is difficult to see cause and effect relationships because they may appear later and in areas that you might not imagine. Personally, I will err on the side of caution until I am convinced that we know what we are doing. The Curies might have fared better had they been more wary.

Based on current evidence, I recommend exercising the utmost care and vigilance when using magnets as a long-term treatment.

MEET MEDICAL DIRECTOR FOR HEALTHPLEX INTENSIVE PROGRAMS

After 30 years as a family therapist, a stint in the Peace Corps and a few years treating Vietnam vets, Dr. Barry Kaplan thought he'd seen every variation on pain and suffering. Yet it wasn't until his own family was stricken with misfortune that he says he finally understood the value of holistic healthcare.

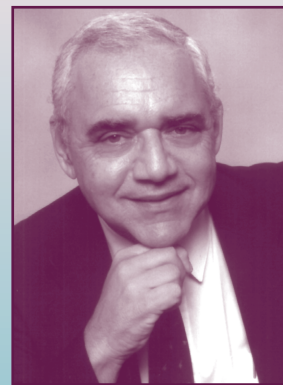
In 1988, his wife Lisa suffered an aneurysm that took much of her physical functioning along with it. Four years later — right about the time Hurricane Andrew hit Miami and destroyed the Kaplans' home and office — she was set back again by two unexpected surgeries and a case of hepatitis.

Lisa had spent years in rehabilitation when Dr. Kaplan finally brought her to HealthPlex Clinical Services. He enrolled her in a two-week Brain & Spinal Cord Dysfunction program. "She had lost the vision in her right eye," he says. "While she was in the program it came back, which seemed

miraculous. My interest was piqued."

The more he learned about the intensive-treatment programs, the more he says he wanted to be part of the team. Now Dr. Kaplan is applying his own personal understanding of the healing process to the intensive-treatment programs. "Having cared for my wife, I can tell you how crucial that role is to the health of the patient," he says. "In the general medical community, doctors never seemed to understand how their words and attitudes toward caregivers ultimately affected their patients."

That's why Dr. Kaplan says one of his missions here — in addition to his administrative role — is to "encourage our therapists to continue involving the whole family in the healing process." Yet he insists he's only adding his insight to a program that's already successful. "The therapists here love helping people, and they take personal responsibility for it," he says. "I feel honored to be associated with them."



Barry Kaplan, MD

"The therapists here have enormous integrity and dedication to what they do," he explains. "They hold their work to be sacred and pure, and that's a rare commodity in today's world, especially in the medical field."



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