

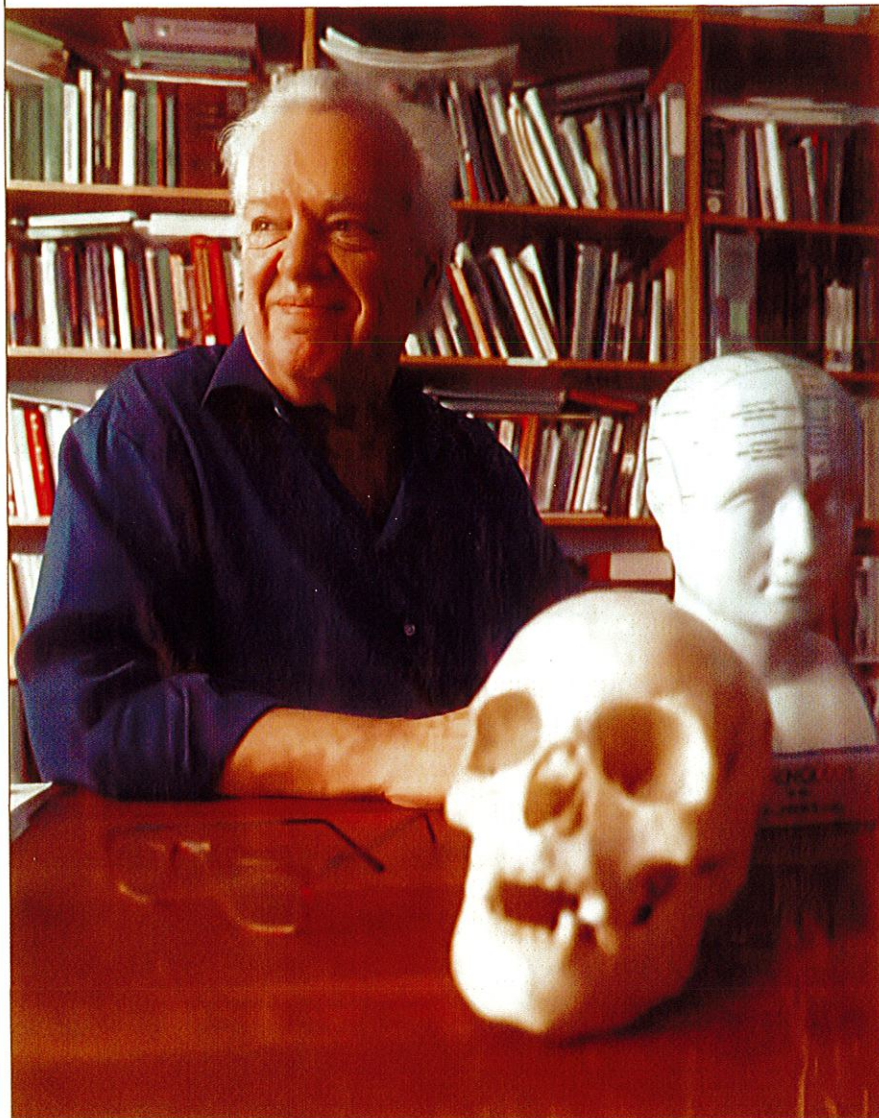
As seen in TIME April 16, 2001

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INNOvators
TIME 100: THE NEXT WAVE

[Alternative Medicine]

>>> Natural forces are the healers of disease. <<< HIPPOCRATES



[CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY]

A New Kind of Pulse

JOHAN UPLEDGER HAS NEVER SHIED FROM risk taking. As a Coast Guard medic in the 1950s, he once performed an appendectomy in the eye of a hurricane with the help of an onshore surgeon who guided him by radio. "To the best of my knowledge," he says, "no one's done that before or since." Today Upledger, 69, keeps on setting precedents. An osteopath by training, he is the founder of a form of nontraditional medicine called craniosacral therapy that is rapidly gaining adherents.

While assisting in a spinal operation in the 1970s, Upledger was startled to notice a strong pulse in the membranes that surrounded the patient's spinal cord. He determined that the pulse—which did not appear in the medical books—was coming from the cerebrospinal fluid that bathes the brain and spinal cord. He came to believe that anything that blocked the flow of this fluid could cause physical and mental distress. "All these membranes affect brain function," he says, "and when they're not moving properly, there can be harm."

To free up the restrictions, Upledger applies light resistance to parts of the body that seem to be stuck. These frequently include the bones of the skull, which Upledger says remain mobile

◀ JOHN UPLEDGER

His treatment addresses an astonishing range of ailments by using gentle manipulation to restore normal circulation in the cerebrospinal fluid that bathes and nourishes the brain and spinal cord

BRIAN SMITH FOR TIME

throughout life—a point many medical doctors dispute. During a craniosacral session, the therapist may gently lift a person's head to allow a skull bone to shift and the normal flow of fluid to resume.

How well does it work? Upledger says the treatments have relieved conditions ranging from headaches and chronic back pain to autism and learning disabilities in children—and there is no shortage of testimonials. He is currently working with Vietnam veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder at his clinic in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., a facility that has trained some 60,000 craniosacral

practitioners. And while many M.D.s remain skeptical of the therapy, others have followed the lead of pain-control centers and physical-rehabilitation units in sending Upledger their patients.

"What we do is take away obstacles," says Upledger, "like removing stones from the road." And that, he might add, has proved far easier than cutting out an appendix in the center of a storm.

—By John Greenwald



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