

WELLNESS RESOURCE

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLNESS RESOURCE MEDICAL CLINIC

Edition 1

Summer 2004

Look Upstream and Live!

Villagers living beside a river noticed increasing numbers of drowning people caught in the river's swift current. They became preoccupied with inventing ever more elaborate technologies to rescue and resuscitate them, never thinking to look upstream to see why the victims were falling in (from Sandra Steingraber's book *Living Downstream*, 1998).

This seems a fitting description of traditional medicine in our country- excellent at treating symptoms and acute disease but lackluster at discovering the cause of these conditions.

For over 15 years the staff at Wellness has attempted to "look upstream" in discovering the cause of symptoms and poor health. This journey not only requires looking, but often requires wading (i.e. diet diaries), swimming (i.e. allergy therapy) or downright kicking and thrashing against the current (ie. giving up bad lifelong habits).

In joining the Wellness Resource Clinic, my own medical interests have expanded from looking downstream (as an emergency physician treating acutely ill patients) to looking upstream at what causes illness. To see patients with chronic headaches, sinusitis and asthma or children with behavioral disorders make a turnaround has been very rewarding. I know much of the success lies in patients who are aware of their bodies and environment and are vigilant in taking treatments.

Our bodies surveillance system (our immune system) is constantly sampling its environment and making adjustments to (cont. on page 2)

Principles of Environmental Medicine

(A quarterly series)



Total Body Load

By Ann Both RNC,FNP

Some people think total body load is the maximum amount of "stuff" you can fit in your SUV. Environmentally sensitive people understand total load to be the amount of substance needed to cause symptoms in an individual.

Most allergic people are sensitive to more than one substance, and it is not unusual for a person to be sensitive to many different things. The effects of these substances combined is the total body load.

Symptoms result from a large exposure of one allergen or small exposures to many allergens. Whatever the cause, your allergic "basket" is overflowing and symptoms result.

For example, if a person is allergic to grasses, and grass pollen counts are high, that person may not be able to tolerate eating as many grains during this period, but at other times of the year (when grass pollen counts are low) they have no problem tolerating grains in their diet. If this same person is also sensitive to perfume and tobacco smoke, he or she might find symptoms have greatly increased while attending the Kentucky Derby (where there will likely be a vast amount of all three substances!).

(cont. on page 2)



So you want to test a specific antigen?

By Patti Byron, Laboratory Director

Of the hundreds of antigens available through our supplier's, there are very few which have standardized potencies. An antigen's potency is measured in Biologically Active Units (or BAUs). Except for 11 common antigens, the BAU for the same antigen will differ between suppliers. Thus it is important to use the same supplier to insure a consistent BAU.

At Wellness Resource we continue to build on the 500+ antigens that we use. Our antigens are made from the very thing that is causing the patient to react. If ragweed is a main problem for a patient, we take just the ragweed pollen itself and dilute it down into a stable saline solution, and that is all. There is nothing else to confuse testing, so skin testing reactions are clear.

We also offer "customized" antigens for patients on an individual basis. These "customized" antigens generally consist of medications, supplements and rare environmental. Some antigens are not available by suppliers and must be specially made through our own lab techniques. Other substances can not be safely skin tested (there is even talk among environmental practitioners about neutralizing patients against snake venom!).

We are proud to be one of the few Environmental Practices that offers this unique service to our patients. If you think you could benefit from your own "customized" antigens, let us know!

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defend against self vs non-self, invader vs. non-invader. Every food we eat or particle we breathe in is broken down into proteins and sampled by this immune process. A hyperactive response to this process (an allergic reaction) can affect any organ system by classic pathways or by less understood immune cascades involving many cell mediators.

Provocation/neutralization has become a powerful tool in:

1. Defining what causes symptoms by history taking and skin testing (because even when we forget about things we touch, eat or smell, the wheal never lies) and
2. taming our immune system through neutralization. The immune system is fine-tuned over time and responds to specific triggers in a less offensive, more appropriate way. Patients may reintroduce a food, pet or activity into their lives that, prior to treatments, would have caused symptoms.

In this first edition newsletter from Wellness we take our hats off to you, our patients. The concept of looking upstream has largely been driven by you- the patient- and is slowly causing a shift in our health care delivery in this country. This shift couldn't be more timely as environmentally triggered illness continues to affect more people worldwide.

Kevin Hegewald MD
The Wellness Resource Clinic

BACK IN SERVICE...



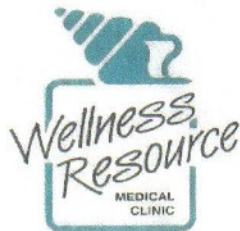
Visit our updated website at:

www.wellness-resource.com
Refer a friend, read our archived newsletters, check pollen forecasts and counts for your local area or

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link to other sites of environmental medicine and allergy. Drop us an email, get directions to the clinic or download new patient forms.

[wellness-resource.com](http://www.wellness-resource.com)



Allergy
&
Environmental
Medicine

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Total Body Load

Substances and situations that influence and increase your total load are many and vary from person to person. These can include (but are not limited to):

- ♦ Elevation in pollen, mold or grass counts
- ♦ Chemical or other exposures
- ♦ Viral or bacterial infections
- ♦ Steroids and immunosuppressant drugs
- ♦ Hormones, puberty, menopause
- ♦ Growth spurts
- ♦ Generalized stress

Keep in mind that at any time certain non-specific irritants (i.e. tobacco smoke, exhaust fumes, perfume pesticides, etc.) can trigger allergic symptoms by increasing your overall total load.

Environmentally sensitive patients need to think like

Sherlock Holmes to track down the cause of an increase in total body load. Here are a few general principles to remember in reducing your Total Body Load:

- ♦ Avoid inciting agents as much as possible
- ♦ Rotate offending foods in your diet
- ♦ Temporarily increase the frequency of taking your antigens
- ♦ Keep your antigens updated for the season. (This means if allergy symptoms are controlled in the spring but symptoms return in the fall, you may need retesting and possible additions to your antigen vial.)

- Ann

Did you know...

Waste needles can be properly disposed of in your own trash. Simply place your needles in a stiff plastic container (but not see-through), place the lid on the full container, and duct tape the lid. Remember to cap your needles so they don't puncture through the sides. This can then be thrown out with your normal household garbage.

Sowing the **SEEDS** of health success:

Sleep
Environment
Exercise
Diet
Support



A well cared for garden yields alot of fruit.

Steeped in tradition...

The **average time** between the creation of new medical knowledge and its use by at least half of all medical practitioners in the USA is **17 years**. (There have been alot of advances in medicine since 1987!)

source: "Managing Clinical Knowledge for Health Care Improvement", Yearbook of Medical Informatics. 2000, pps. 65-70

www.Wellness-Resource.com
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