

“When you think you’ve got the answers – you just may not have”

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QUALIFICATIONS: BA, Dip CNM.

TRAINING: CNM Naturopathic Nutritional Therapist.



How long did it take for you to qualify?

Five years at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM), as I had to defer twice for babies!

Where do you practise?

Solihull, West Midlands, or anywhere in the world via Skype/Zoom. My health clinic is called PURELY, which is an acronym for Prevent Unique Regain Energy Live You.

What’s your main therapy/modality?

My main therapy is working as a nutritional therapist. I am hugely passionate about what I do as I believe in it 100%. I want to empower people to feel the best that they can, and I believe the root cause of chronic disease is down to diet/lifestyle and our environment.

We are not educated about the impact of food choices and food quality on our health and how modern life can greatly impact this too. I want to educate people, not just the ones that walk into



my clinic, but a wider audience, taking my talks to schools/events/health centres to open people’s minds. I recently spoke at a health event, Thrive Urban Wellness, and you could literally see the light bulb moments going off when people were hearing the truth about food. I have recently been given a slot on a health radio station which again I will be using to educate, educate, educate! One of the pointers on the naturopathic principles that has always stuck with me is, “Doctor as teacher” – educate the patient and emphasise self-

responsibility for health. This is how I see my role.

Why did you decide to become a practitioner?

I have been interested in the human body since childhood, and have always been really excited when finding out what benefits food can have on your health. I was at a crossroads in my life, and training as a nutritional therapist seemed like the right path for me. Since then it has provided an invaluable tool for my family, since my daughter contracted

Campylobacter as a two-year-old. I was able to recognise the cascade effect it had on her health, and help to rebuild her from the gut up, or maybe, now, the mitochondria up. Also, my mother-in-law was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer; I was able to support her and add months onto her original diagnosis, and yes, she is still here 20 months on from the original three-six months her oncologist gave her.

It has now become my life, which I live and breathe daily. The field is always evolving and they’re

always new doors to open, which I find so exciting.

How long have you been in practice?

I am brand new! I just qualified in August 2017. It feels much longer since I had to defer my course twice to have my two gorgeous girls.

Who or what has been the main influence/inspiration on your practice?

I have quite a few. My first has to be my tutor Jo Gamble, who has always been a massive inspiration – her knowledge is vast, and I would love to be as knowledgeable as her in the future.

The Weston Price Foundation changed my life initially – I love what they are doing! (<https://www.westonaprice.org>).

Dr Datis Kharrazian: his book, *Why Isn't My Brain Working Properly* really blew me away with a focus beyond the gut onto neurotransmitters and the impact on brain health. Also Dr Sarah Myhill: her books are invaluable, as I always find myself picking them up as a reference tool in clinic. Specifically her book *Diabetes: delicious diets, not dangerous drugs* – I just couldn't put down; so much invaluable advice.

My current read by Dr Stephen Sinatra *The Sinatra Solution* is a focus on nutraceuticals in cardiology, which is mind-blowing. He is taking his approach right down to the mitochondria, which I find fascinating, and I feel this is where our field is moving towards, more of a focus on the powerhouse of our cells for real healing.

What conditions or types of client do you see most?

I've had a mix, but probably more children at this stage. As I am a mother myself I have a huge interest in children's nutrition, and I think subconsciously I put that vibe out there, so this is what comes to me.

What do you find the easiest to work with?



Eager clients who are desperate for change; they are the ones who usually work the hardest and see the benefits.

What is your favourite type of client?

I love a challenging client, because it challenges me to learn more and to push myself. One thing I have learnt on my journey is that when you think you've got the answers, you just may not have. Then you find yourself going deeper than you imagined and uncovering more than you knew existed. So don't just assume you know where you're heading with a client, as this may change. I love piecing together the jigsaw puzzle. I think the root cause can be so much deeper than you anticipate

What is the most challenging type of symptoms/illness/problem that you get presented with?

Food intolerances are a nightmare, because the symptoms can be so non-specific and pinpointing them can be difficult.

It can also be very challenging for individuals to remove these foods from their diet, and that's even if they have symptoms; some food intolerances are completely asymptomatic, but it's what they are doing inside. That's why finding the root cause is key, because foods are just part of the bigger picture, so essentially finding that root cause should ease the intolerances and hopefully allow the individual to eat all foods without dysregulation. I also don't believe through experience that gut permeability is the root cause for food intolerances, and it can go far beyond this.

What one thing is absolutely essential to you in your practice?

Support documentation for clients is key. I like to supply them with everything they need to succeed, even down to weekly meal planners so they get an idea of what real food meals look like, and recipes to go with them. We have to remember how clueless people

are, especially when they have relied upon pre-packaged meals, they need hand-holding and educating until they are free to fly solo. I also recommend books to read to those who are interested because I know this will set off those light bulb moments and get them to think outside the box.

Do you enhance your business with any projects outside of your clinic?

Yes I do, I believe this will be at the key to a successful practice – that and happy referrals. I am a writer for *Functional Medicine Magazine* and I also have my own radio show on the Health & Wellbeing show. I am also a big advocate of education, so I write my own talks and speak to people about health. I am currently writing one for teenagers and I will be going into local high schools for their PSE lesson. I want to inspire youngsters about what foods can help them achieve and how good they can feel without depriving themselves. I know growing up I did not understand this and thought the only way to look great and feel great was through deprivation.

A really exciting project I have just become involved in is the "Culinary Medicine" project which is being headed up by The Doctor's Kitchen, Dr Rupy Aujla. It is being held at the prestigious Westminster Kingsway Culinary School, which is the school to train in if you want to be a top chef.

Which CAM book has helped or inspired you most?

Dr Datis Kharrazian – *Why is My Brain Not Working* and *Why do I still have Thyroid Symptoms?*

Dr Sarah Myhill – *Diabetes: delicious diets, not dangerous drugs* – a must read, not just on diabetes, but on a health in general – an invaluable clinic tool. Dr Sarah Myhill – *Sustainable Medicine* – great reference book. Dr Stephen Sinatra – *The Sinatra Solution* – mind blowing read, taking cardiology to the next level!

IHCAN's In Practice feature has ➔



→ always been inspiring to me, as you learn from your peers and what inspires them may also inspire you, which it certainly has for me.

Why do you do what you do?

I love helping people – it is just in my nature; I always put others before myself. I feel this career fits me like a glove because I genuinely want to help people and will give it all I've got.

If money, time and effort were no object, what one thing would you change about your practice or integrative medicine in general?

The dream is to own a clinic, a one-stop shop for all your health needs, and hire other clinicians to work alongside me with other disciplines like acupuncture and so on. I would have an in-house phlebotomy service for ease of testing (as getting blood draws

can be challenging, as I've found), connecting with the likes of Cyrex and Genova, and offering intravenous vitamin infusions, and maybe a cooking school so people can learn skills to stay healthy and enjoy good food.

What piece of advice would you give to newly qualified practitioners who are just setting up a business?

Take one step at a time, don't just see the end goal of what you want because it's hard to get from A-Z in one go. Just take your time, because this is a life-long career, and let it evolve naturally through you.

What is the biggest challenge you face as a practitioner?

I think people have a preconceived idea that all a nutritional therapist can do is tell you what to eat, but it goes far deeper than that. I believe we

are the future of medicine, and it is getting people to understand this and how much we can help rebalance the body, and yes – it is science-based! So often people say we aren't evidence-based, but everything we do has evidence.

I believe we are living in really exciting times where more people are switched onto their health and are fed up with the current medical model and are seeking more. Now is the time to get out there and educate! Get people to see!

What would you like to see covered in IHCAN that we're not getting to?

I'm seeing so much on mitochondrial therapy and how mitochondrial dysfunction is at the root of all disease. I would love this area divulged more and show how we can really target the cellular energy in therapy so the body has the energy to heal itself.

I don't always feel that food



and general supplementation is enough, especially when a ROS chain reaction is in process. I have found this out with my own daughter through trial and error, when gut nutrition has not been enough, and I have been simply peeling back the layers, which has led to me to mitochondria therapy. I am now fascinated by the subject and want to soak it all in!

Case study Wrongly-diagnosed hyperactive thyroid

A 64-year-old woman came to see me, after having been diagnosed with hyperactive thyroid.

She was overweight, suffering palpitations, and had instances of chronic fatigue.

She had been prescribed carbimazole (hyperactive thyroid medication).

She wasn't seeing any benefit from the conventional medicine approach, so came to me to see if I could get to the bottom of her health complaints.

Assessment

From reading her intake questionnaire alone I suspected that her diagnosis was incorrect. She had both symptoms of thyroid hypo and hyper activity, which I knew were clinical features of Hashimoto's. So my suspicion led me down that path.

Intervention

I initially wanted blood tests for the following:

- Genova Thyroid Panel
- Vitamin D, as deficiency is associated with autoimmunity
- Ferritin/B12/iron, which if low could be contributing to palpitations/chronic fatigue
- Cholesterol/triglycerides, which could be contributing to endothelial dysfunction

I wanted her to go gluten- and dairy-free due to the link with Hashimoto's, but requested that she do this after the Genova panel so we didn't get a false negative.

Outcome

The Genova Thyroid Panel did in fact reveal a Hashimoto's type presentation.

Vitamin D was 29 nmol/L, so very deficient.

From this the client was put on a gluten- and dairy-free diet, and was educated on the principle of these antigenic foods sparking an immune response and potential attack of the thyroid tissue.

We also decided she should follow Jeannette Hyde's Gut Makeover plan to reset her gut and gave her ideas on delicious naturally

gluten- and dairy-free foods.

The client was really pleased with our findings because she could now get the real help she needed.

The results were instant, and her consultant happily weaned her off her medication.

The gluten- and dairy-free diet was just what she needed; the client did not have any relapses of chronic fatigue and lost weight, so she was over the moon, and said she had never felt better.

We put her on a few supplements to support her progress. These included vitamin D3 to correct the deficiency, magnesium for cellular energy support/detoxification, and methylated vitamin B complex – again for cellular energy production/detoxification.

Progress/future

She moved to France but keeps me regularly updated on her health and happiness.

I gave her so much education on the importance of real foods and how to have a naturally gluten- and dairy-free diet. I wanted her to focus on quality of food – quality meats/fish and eating a high consumption of vegetables aiming for at least ten portions a day and at least a variety of 20 per week, with the obvious inclusion of beneficial fats.

She was advised to buy Jeannette Hyde's book for further education – which she did.

What did you learn?

Dietary changes were enough for this client. I initially wanted to put in lots of gut support supplements, but she did not want to spend the money, so we went with that, and a dietary intervention alone turned out just to be the ticket. From this I've learnt that as a practitioner I don't have to overload on supplements and we can try one thing at a time, tweaking as we go along for optimum results.

Would you do anything different next time?

I think I got lucky with this client and hit the nail on the head from

the offset; it isn't always this simple. This client was very optimistic and positive by nature and welcomed the changes. Not all clients are this easy to work with so may need more hand-holding.

Not happy with the NHS: the client's feedback to "the system"

My client sent me the following – it speaks for itself:

"Hi Daniela,
Just thought you would like to know that on Thursday when I saw the consultant I was handed a postcard, as were all the patients that day. It was to give feedback to the NHS about the treatment I have been receiving. I have just logged on to their system and it was basically a series of tick boxes, but at the end it gave me chance to say something.

This is what I put:
'I was also seeing a nutritionist (re my thyroid problem as I do not believe it can be successfully controlled with medication alone and that diet has a large role to play with thyroid disorders, so I elected to see a nutritionist privately in Birmingham).

'My nutritionist requested a full thyroid profile for which I paid £140, along with a vitamin D blood test. I had the results and it was found that I was very deficient in vitamin D, where the result was 29 nmol/L and the thyroid profile suggested I had Hashimoto's disease, which was never explained to me by my NHS consultant.

'I had a pre-arranged "telephone consultation" and therefore I emailed all the results of my private tests to my consultant's secretary clearly stating my NHS number/name/date of my arranged telephone consultation. This was done at least one week before my appointment. On the day of the telephone consultation I waited at home for a call two hours after the pre-arranged time. I then telephoned the clinic myself and asked when the consultant was going to call me. The receptionist

said they had not called me because I had not had the appropriate blood tests done. I said that not only had I had the tests done they were emailed to the consultant's secretary over a week ago!

'The consultant rang me back 15 minutes later after these had been obtained from his secretary. The consultation was less than successful in my opinion and I feel that the nutritionist who I paid to see helped me far more than the NHS consultant and the whole NHS process.

'At no time was it determined that I was so low in vitamin D. I began vitamin D replacement, a diet that was gluten-free and dairy-free, and within three months my thyroid is back to normal and the carbimazole has been stopped after seeing the consultant on Thursday. I believe the NHS need to look more closely at the relationship between diet and thyroid/auto-immune diseases.' "

References and resources

- The book that helped me the most with this intervention was Datis Kharrazian's *Why Do I Still Have Thyroid Symptoms?* This is where I got my light bulb moment from which led me down the route of the testing I chose. It hit the nail on the head.
- The other journals and studies cemented this knowledge further and guided my plan. I also read Jeannette Hyde's book *The Gut Makeover* and felt this was a fantastic intermediate for an easy-to-follow gut healing plan. I made it even easier to follow by compiling documents including lists of what to and not to eat, recipes and meal planners tailored to her, and also suggested she read the book – which she did.
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- Links to published papers online at www.ihcan-mag.com/references.



We know our practitioners are quietly getting on with changing people's lives, every day – and we want to celebrate and share the inspiration. In Practice is coordinated by regular contributor Rebecca Smith, who runs a successful practice of her own, established 20 years ago. Contact her direct to be part of the feature: rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk, and follow her on Twitter: @NCHHealthClinic.