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# Could the mind play a bigger role in healthcare?

45



By Tony Lobl

Health, Notebook - A selection of Independent views -, Opinion  
Monday, 26 March 2012 at 12:00 am

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An “unthinkable” future without antibiotics, as once easily treated infections rage out of control – this is the “nightmare scenario” painted in graphic detail by media outlets around the world over the past couple of weeks.

News stories have been speaking of infections “nearly impossible to treat”, with drug-resistant strains of superbugs endangering the world’s health on a level with AIDS or a flu pandemic.

The frightening scenario, underlined by apocalyptic headlines and warnings from experts, was triggered by comments from Dr Margaret Chan, director general of the UN’s World Health Organisation, at a gathering of infectious disease experts in Copenhagen.

“A post-antibiotic era means, in effect, an end to modern medicine as we know it,” she told the meeting.

Anyone reading these reports – and the WHO’s recently released book on the subject – could be forgiven for thinking we face a very uncertain future indeed.

But could it be a storm cloud with a silver lining? Might there be fresh approaches to health care waiting in the wings as the so-called “miracle medicine” of antibiotics apparently passes its use-by date?

There are certainly a number of thinkers today who are calling for radically different health care approaches. The ever-intriguing TED talks, for instance, have: [highlighted](#) a technology-based personal health movement that could keep “50 percent of care out of institutions, clinics, hospitals and nursing homes”; [called](#) for a wholesale return to “the old-fashioned physical exam, the bedside chat, the power of informed observation”; and [stressed](#) the need to overhaul a culture of denial that prevents doctors from improving patient care by learning from their mistakes.

Another thinker stressing the need for medicine to evolve is Larry Dossey, a practicing internist and internationally renowned advocate of “the role of the mind in health and the role of spirituality in healthcare”.

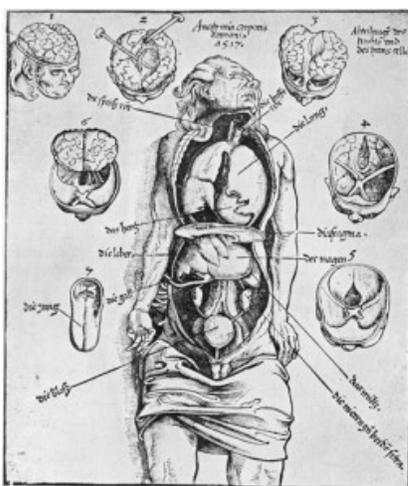
In Reinventing Medicine Dr. Larry Dossey points to three eras of medical care:

The first, he says, is the familiar approach of “mechanical, material, or physical medicine”.

The second is the era of “mind-body medicine” with which physicians and patients have become increasingly acquainted through therapeutic use of psychoneuroimmunology, the “relaxation response”, mindfulness, biofeedback and cognitive behavioural therapy.

Mind-body medicine recognises our thoughts play a significant role in establishing and restoring our health. Such a thought-body link-up has been widely explored and documented by scientific researchers, most notably through studies into the placebo effect – the effective use of dummy treatments with no inherent chemical value.

The third era offers a new glimmer of sunlight on the horizon – a time in which, Dossey says, we will see that “mind is a factor in healing both within and between persons”.



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The latter includes the tantalising prospect of increasing our individual sense of ownership over our well-being.

But it often takes the jarring prospect of a system's impending failure to finally prompt us to look at other intriguing possibilities.

Could WHO's disheartening prognosis effectively be signalling such a transitional time, a breaking of new ground?

Because the very core of "third era medicine" now clamouring for our attention is actually the health-giving power of a more [spiritual approach](#) to living.

As Dossey puts it: "The power of love to change bodies is legendary, built into folklore, common sense, and everyday experience."

Struggling for years with a recurring sinus infection, which antibiotics failed to reach, I was introduced to a spiritual approach to healing. Implementing this practice at a time of suffering, my pain diminished and it disappeared soon after. That was 25 years ago and I have never since suffered from that problem.

Such experiences are frequently dismissed as "anecdotal evidence", as opposed to scientific data. As Hope College Professor of Psychology David Myers has [put it](#): "Although compelling, stories and anecdotes do not determine empirical truth."

Nevertheless, those improvements in health are very real to the individual who finds permanent relief from a need unmet by medicine.

As WHO's well-meaning warning rings in our ears there is the possibility for us to move beyond the borders of preconceived, material expectations and explore more spiritual avenues. As we do so, we might find ourselves entering a new period of empowerment.

Antibiotics may one day be a thing of the past, as Dr Chan suggested, but a nightmare scenario of uncontrollable infections does not have to be our future.

Tagged in: [antibiotics](#), [healing](#), [health](#), [hospital](#), [Margaret Chan](#)

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**irislynch**

The book I am writing and have nearly finished, is THE MIRACLE OF SELF POWER., Iris D. Lynch

4 minutes ago

Like Reply



**MHB**

Give all sick people a book to read mind over matter.

Than health care will cost only the cost of a mass produce book

We will not need doctors or hospitals

Just undertakes

9 minutes ago

Like Reply



**joedoakes202**

Just look at placebo studies . . .

:)

The power of believing is awesome.

17 minutes ago

Like Reply



**RapidFire**

The world has NEVER experienced an out of control "infection" epidemic where millions or tens of thousands have died. Only a small percentage of people in this world have immune deficiencies which cannot fight off infections with high doses of antibiotics. We go through this liberal propaganda cr\*p every year. Swine Flu (H1N1), Bird Flu (H5N1), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), etc, etc, etc. All government lies.

1 hour ago 1 Like

Like Reply



**Jeff Kuryk**

Learn how Canadians feel about their healthcare system by viewing "Obamacare Scare" on YouTube.

1 hour ago

Like Reply



**jay\_birdy**

The Christian Science Religion has in fact been practicing mind healing and spirituality for well over 100 years. And it does work.

1 hour ago 1 Like

Like Reply



**tprince**

How's that working out for you in a Muslim based Tyrannical Regime? Just asking.. Your standard of living improving? Or is it just all in our "Christian Science" re programmed heads?  
Sarc intended. Wake up for the love of God. It's a total sham.

The Federal Reserve 100 year contract has been working fine for the last 99 years also, but their contract is up at the end of this year so faith no more? C-

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mon...

0 minutes ago in reply to jay\_birdy Like Reply



rational\_man2

it hasn't worked once...  
wake up.

1 hour ago in reply to jay\_birdy 3 Likes Like Reply



tprince

The implications of 'Obamacare' would be 'grave and profound' is what MSM should be reporting. \*If, this does pass the Supreme Court as being "Constitutional" Be afraid, be very afraid, that will confirm my greatest fears from recent Bill's and EO's passed that YOU are \*Technically Federal Property which would make even more sense in the light of the last Power Grab EO Obama signed into law 1.5 weeks ago seizing all National Infrastructure and assets... meaning you, your person included.

The United States of America is obviously a Corporation at this point, not Land of the Free, people should know by now that from birth, there is a GDP estimation assigned to you in the form of your SS Number.

Wake up folks, because if the Supreme Court can pass Obama Care, they can pass anything. Passports or beans and bullets. Two options, the "dream" has been exactly that, just an illusion.

We have had a free market solution in the Health Care sector for years and years, untill it was turned into a bureaucracy by TPTB. Too big to fail turned too big to function.

The hand writing is on the wall America.

Our Federal Government should never have enough power to force any American to buy Health Insurance in leiw of possible incarceration / fines and penalties? Welcome to Amerika, USSA at that point.

-Concerned Citizen.

1 hour ago 3 Likes Like Reply



jhoger

Sigh... yes you are in the health care market, yes the FEDERAL government can regulate that activity. That's how precedent has stacked up over the years, like it or not.

But what you and other conservatives seem to ignore in your hysteria is the remedy the Framers put in place for us: elected, representative government. Congress won't legislate everyone eat broccoli because such an intrusion would be offensive and they would be voted out of office for such overreach.

Now Obamacare? It's not overreach. There is a REAL problem of 30 million uninsured. And everyone who can afford insurance should absolutely be expected to have it unless they are so astronomically rich as to be able to post a bond to cover any eventuality. I shouldn't have to pay for your freedom to go uncovered in the form of higher premiums.

56 minutes ago in reply to tprince Like Reply



tprince

You ignorant to the Constitution then, first off, your being quite presumptuous by calling me a Conservative, I'm a registered Democrat, I am on the conservative side mind you, but your trying to shape \*opinions here IMHO with all due disrespect. I worked on Obamas Presidential Campaign in '08 and have seen nothing but destruction to our Founders Parchments since then.

Again, for the dence ones out there, the Federal Government under the commerce clauses of the Constitution can NOT force you to purchase health (Hell) Care insurance, I'm sure it's backwards speak for Death care assurance. George Orwell is being vindicated vicariously through this Obama Regime of Czars. Obama care is a total power grab, just like bailing out the car manufactures and Banks to big to function when it was them who caused the problem to begin with, Oohh, but they have the solution to the problem .. conveniently now don't they?

If 30 million people are uninsured right now, go search when this statistic wasn't a problem then you have your answer. Were getting socialised medicine alright, Either through the King or Obamney, can't fight it but I can sure complain about it.

Kind of like the "Patriot Act" that ended up being against "We the People".

You have to purchase car Insurance because you drive on state and federal roadways, is your person Federal property? Last time I checked, it was NO! I will stop confusing the sheep with fact's now.

ANY CENTRALIZATION OF POWER ALWAYS RESULTS IN A DICTATORSHIP.

The only problem with Socialism is eventually, you run out of other peoples money. Free Capitalism is dead now, Govt. bailouts ensuerd that so Social programs must begin taking shape in Amerika I guess?

Good day to you Sir.

15 minutes ago in reply to jhoger 1 Like Like Reply



**jhoger**

Good day, and congrats on completely missing my argument. WHOOSH!

2 minutes ago in reply to tprince Like Reply



**LowDeductInsuranceISocialism**

You don't want to be forced to pay higher premiums, but you ARE ok with forcing others to pay high premiums, even for pre-existing conditions.

Insurance is a product designed to reduce one's own risk financially. It is a puddle of socialism floating in a sea of capitalism. What the left is trying to do is to finance socialism through mandated insurance.

21 minutes ago in reply to jhoger 1 Like Like Reply



**jhoger**

Insurance socializes risk, yes? Yes. And it is a FUNDAMENTAL part of our capitalist system, not an aberration.

3 minutes ago in reply to LowDeductInsuranceISocialism Like Reply



**tprince**

Spot on correct, and that's comming from a Dem with a sence of doing the right thing for our Republic, (citizens) not tear down a Nation with arbitrary additional costs when Blue Cross Blue Sheild worked perfectly fine for me all my life.. till now? Were not going to have to really worry about it anyway.

6 minutes ago Like Reply

in reply to LowDeductInsuranceISocialism



**priapist**

we humans will be on this planet for only a blip of time.  
the germs and cockroaches will be here long after.

2 hours ago

Like Reply



**priapist**

Dr. Dossey, it's called the placebo effect, up to half of patients get better just with salt pills. Antibiotics are over-rated. Your healthy immune system is your best ally against disease. The strong will survive, the weak perish and we evolve.

2 hours ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



**priapist**

the world is over-populated as is. we need some big pandemics to thin out the herd.

2 hours ago

Like Reply



**John Locke**

Geez, Tony, lemme have whatever you're smokin'!

2 hours ago 1 Like

Like Reply



**Matthew Gold**

Its striking how remarkably uniformed many of people are. Dr. Chan was refering to antibiotic resistant bacteria, which we can't treat. As we use antibiotics more, a greater number of bacteria become resistant to them. This is the dooms day scenario they are talking about. Not rationing healthcare, read a damn book.

2 hours ago

Like Reply



**THOMAS**

Cor blimey! All them years as a Doctor and I never realised bacteria have minds. Ask them politely and they'll go away.

2 hours ago 5 Likes

Like Reply



**andrewp111**

What a load of crap!. But it is an easy way to cut costs. Instead of expensive surgery or the newest and most expensive antibiotics, Obama's socialized medicine just prescribes a painkiller and meditation.

3 hours ago 6 Likes

Like Reply



**Derrick Hardin**

This is really, really old news. Norman Cousins published "Anatomy of an Illness" back in 1979 which examines in depth the mind-body relationship in health. Larry Dossey does do some good work, but he came after and was influenced by Norman Cousins.

3 hours ago 1 Like

Like Reply



**Carl van Zijll de Jong**

Based on the fact that one's health is one's own responsibility makes the health service transparent, simple, and health effective for people. Too much self interest of

health practitioners and politicians is opposing a simple solution. If we would truly care about one another's health, then we should remind each other that the truth is: "It is all in the mind." Instead of being occupied with the stressful things of life, we should encourage each other to fulfil "the aim of life". For your information Google "The World Monetary Order".

3 hours ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



**John Galt**

Ah, more lame excuses to prepare us for the rationing of healthcare I presume. If memory serves, lots and lots of people died at an early age when these "old fashioned" touchy feely techniques were used. Pathetic.

3 hours ago 7 Likes

Like Reply



**wgbgoldenarm**

Read Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy for the true way of healing and its free.

4 hours ago 8 Likes

Like Reply



**Mike Cumpston**

Such things as hippies and social workers buy into i Ching, zen, rapid eyeball movement and other bullcrap. They are very stupid whereas, medical practitioners need to be firmly rooted in relality and dedicated to scientific epistemology.

4 hours ago 6 Likes

Like Reply



**aldealand**

Thank you for calling me,a social worker with more than one point of agreement with the ethos of the original hippie movement, a "thing". You're most flattering and respectful....

4 hours ago in reply to Mike Cumpston 2 Likes

Like Reply



**heavenor**

I believe the mind is very powerful when it comes to healing. But there are occassions a disease (for whatever reason) does get out of control. And intervention via medicine and/or operations are needed, to at least bring the disease to a point where the mind and body can take over caring for the body without stressing out other aspects of body functions. This is crucial....not even the body can rob peter to pay paul for very long.

4 hours ago 3 Likes

Like Reply

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