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Tip for That #11: Integrative Medicine Competency: Energy Medicine (Overview)

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Tip for That #11

Integrative Medicine Competency: Energy Medicine (Overview)

August 21, 2017

On this the day of the total solar eclipse, let's consider the importance of energy in our lives. In conventional or Western medicine we use energy through various modalities for both diagnosis and treatment, including x-rays/radiation, magnetic resonance imaging, ultrasound, cardiac pacemakers and UV light therapy (for psoriasis or seasonal affective disorder).

The term *energy medicine* is often used in the field of integrative medicine to describe various healing techniques. The underlying principle of energy medicine posits that one can manipulate the body's system of energy (biofield) in a manner that can positively impact health. The term *energy medicine* is a broadly used concept that includes anything involving energy as part of the therapy, such as magnet therapy, sound energy therapy, light therapy and Reiki. How these modalities work and if their effects are related to a human biofield are currently a matter of study and debate.

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) distinguishes between health care involving two types of energy – *veritable energy*, which can be measured, and *putative energy*, which cannot be measured with our current technology.

Veritable energy fields include things like vibrational energy (sound/music), electromagnetic forces (visible light), magnet therapy (used for pain) and monochromatic radiation (lasers).

Types of putative energy therapies include spiritual healing, Reiki, Healing Touch, Qigong (“chee-gong”), Tai Chi (“ty-chee”), yoga and intercessory prayer and are believed to assist with healing. This field of energy medicine is based on the premise that all physical objects (bodies) and psychological processes (thoughts, emotions, beliefs and attitudes) are expressions of

energy. Therefore, all bodies are thought to be infused with a "subtle" energy or life force. This life force is known in traditional Chinese medicine as qi ("CHEE"), in the Judeo-Christian tradition as spirit, and in Ayurvedic medicine as represented by the doshas.

When I discuss energy with patients, I address energies which harm and energies which heal. Stay tuned for more in-depth discussions of such energies in future Tips for That. In the meantime, consider learning more about energy in the human body, and how it can affect health and disease through well-established scientific research presented in this book:
Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis, 2e by James L. Oschman, PhD

References (access only for Aurora Family Medicine Residents):

Energy Medicine: Foundations. Integrative Medicine in Residency (IMR) 2017

https://integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/program/IMR_FamilyMed_2017/energy_medicine_foundations/foundations_of_energy_medicine/1.html

I hope you enjoyed this installment of Tip for That. My intent is to educate and provide quick tips for excellent patient care. I welcome your feedback.

In Health,
Kristen

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