



Anger, Grief, Compassion and Technology in Naturopathic Care

Marianne Trevorrow, MA, ND

As I write this letter in early July, we've been dealing with well over a year of navigating the COVID pandemic, and the collective grief of revelations about outbreaks and deaths in our Long-Term Care, Indigenous, BIPOC and homeless communities, overlapping lockdowns that have affected many ND's livelihoods, and provincial health care mobilizations that often seem to have left us out of consideration altogether. Most of us have had to shift our delivery of care almost overnight and are trying to juggle compassionate naturopathic care with a rapidly expanding number of telehealth platforms, with varying levels of reliability and suitability to clinical best practices.

As we cope as a profession with these multiple shocks, recently we have been further confronted with the news of multiple unmarked gravesites (five, at current count) of young children at Indigenous residential schools, with likely many similar revelations to come. As Canadians, the revelations of how we have treated our Indigenous people with criminal indifference, removing children from their families and placing them in overcrowded and substandard accommodations, and subjecting them to abuse and callous indifference to their welfare, is shocking and demands reflection and a collective response to the calls for action from the 2015 Federal Truth and Reconciliation report.

For NDs trying to come to terms with these traumatic revelations; whether on social media, in our conversations with each other, or in our clinical care, it can be difficult to articulate how we should support our Indigenous and Métis patients, neighbors and colleagues. As editors, we are also reflecting on this issue; after recent conversations with researchers at the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), and in Indigenous Public Health at several institutions, we are planning to publish a series of commentaries in upcoming editions on naturopathic Indigenous health from a position of cultural understanding and humility.

This issue of *CAND Vital Link* will be our last print edition before we make the transition to our digital platform, and so it is fitting that our theme is on adaptation of new technologies into naturopathic practice. Our first article is a commentary by White and Whalley about their experience supervising the implementation of virtual care across the CCNM network during the first months of the COVID pandemic. As they write, teaching shifts went from 1% to 100% virtual delivery within a 10 day period, meaning secure video and communication systems suitable to large scale use had to be rapidly scaffolded onto the existing EMR, and everyone trained in the new system. Looking back a year later, they highlight the communication and technical challenges they faced, and how their clinical didactics were able to adapt to this new care delivery method.

Our second article pertains to a new technology that is increasingly showing up in clinical practice with diabetes, namely Continuous Glucose Monitoring, or CGM. These devices monitor interstitial fluid glucose levels on a continuous basis, creating data which can be uploaded to smartphones or secure patient messaging platforms. As author Duizer points out, they can be an effective tool to reinforce improved glycemic management by providing 'real time' feedback on the effect of dietary, exercise or lifestyle choices. Although the costs may be a barrier to some populations, for those with insulin dependent forms of diabetes (ether childhood or adult onset), this technology has the potential to revolutionize patient care for these populations and is perfectly congruent with the lifestyle approach of naturopathic medicine.

As mentioned previously, while we have been carrying on with our regular quarterly publication schedule, we are also diligently working on our first digital edition for the Fall, including revamping our editorial and submissions policies to be in alignment with international publication and medical journal standards. While we still have much behind-the-scenes work to do, we are excited at our progress to date, and look forward to testing the new members' portal and pages in advance of our launch in late September.

In the meantime, however, please enjoy these articles, and as always, we appreciate member feedback on our current and upcoming editions.

Marianne Trevorrow, ND.

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Editor in Chief