

Naturopathic Notes: Addressing Chronic Disease with Naturopathic Medicine

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Our last edition of 2019 is a time of beginnings and endings; for the decade, and for some important staffing changes at the CAND and the *Vital Link*.

Our theme for this edition is managing chronic disease risk. Health Canada statistics tell us that chronic diseases such as cancer, coronary heart disease and type II diabetes are the leading cause of disability and death in Canada and place a significant strain on our publicly funded health care system. Many studies have noted that the prevalence of these conditions falls disproportionately on our more vulnerable populations: indigenous and northern communities, people of lower socioeconomic status, and those struggling with mental health, trauma and addiction issues. These topics will all be the subject of upcoming editions, as we seek to understand areas of health where naturopathic medicine can reach out to these underserved communities and areas of practice.

From a Public Health standpoint, working with modifiable behavioral factors for chronic disease risk is an area where naturopathic doctors are already providing significant benefit to our public system, as well as supporting the increasing numbers of Canadians who are seeking out naturopathic doctors for their care.¹

Our regular CAND Governmental Relations report leads off this issue from our Executive Director, Shawn O'Reilly, who updates us on CAND strategies to work with the new Federal Health Minister Patty Hajdu, as well as ongoing lobbying efforts to obtain coverage with Indigenous and Veteran's Affairs, and the inclusion of NDs as practitioners able to authorize cannabis for medicinal purposes.

Our feature clinical practice article leads off this edition with Paola Cubillos outlining research on adult use of recreational cannabis, as well as strategies for communicating risks around various methods of ingestion and clinical evaluation of problematic use. Dr. Cubillos is a dually qualified MD/ND, who currently serves as Medical Director for CB2 Insights in Cali, Colombia, where she also maintains a private integrative practice.

Our next two articles address different factors contributing to cardiovascular disease risk with modification strategies. Leigha Saunders first assesses evidence linking disordered sleep to increased

CVD risk, possible neuroendocrine mechanisms, and mind-body clinical interventions to improve sleep quality and duration. David Duizer then outlines a personalized clinical CVD prevention framework, focusing on the use of conventional laboratory biomarkers to individualize treatment options. Dr. Saunders is the founder of True Roots Healthcare in Uxbridge, Ontario, while Dr. Duizer is the Director of DAMY Health in Vancouver, BC.

Similarly, James Conway writes on a possible physiologic link between chronic migraine and metabolic syndrome and discusses an evidence-informed lifestyle focused approach to benefit both conditions. Dr. Conway is a practicing clinician in Langley, BC.

Finally, we are adding a new article category in this edition; expert commentary on novel, controversial, or recent studies of relevance to naturopathic practice. Lara Briden leads off with a review of a recent Lancet meta-analysis of Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT), which caused considerable controversy on publication. Dr. Briden is the author of the recent book *Period Repair Manual: Natural Treatment for Better Hormones and Better Periods* (2017) and practices in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Lastly as mentioned, we have some changes to our editorial board and staff. Drs. Tanya Lee, Kim Sanders and Nicole Redvers have joined our board as reviewers, and give us a broader pool of clinical and research expertise as we gear up for expanded editions in 2020/21. We are very glad to have them all on board, as well as our returning reviewers, all of whom volunteer their time to help produce great quality professional content for our readers.

As we go to press, we also say goodbye to our longtime Managing Editor and CAND Marketing and Communications Director, Alex McKenna. I have personally worked with Alex for over ten years at the *Vital Link*, as both a contributor and editorial board member. We shared a common vision to make the journal *the* voice for the best content and practices of naturopathic medicine in Canada.

Alex has been synonymous with the *Vital Link* for many years, quietly shepherding new and experienced authors alike through the review process with diplomacy and good humour over the deadlines and last-minute changes inevitable on publishing schedules. During his tenure, he labored tirelessly to transform the journal from its original newsletter format to the fully peer-reviewed and scholarly professional journal our members enjoy now. During this time, he led the ongoing recruitment and management of a volunteer team of