

Solving the Clinical Mystery

By Kitt Walsh

*It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence.
It biases the judgment... Sherlock Holmes*

Like literature's most famous detective, Dr. Daniel P. Hillis loves a mystery. Describing himself as naturally inquisitive, the Naples-based Chiropractic Physician finds solving persistent health problems for his patients a welcome challenge, particularly when other doctors have been unsuccessful.

"I don't believe in the 'throwing-up-my-hands' type of medicine," says Hillis. "I persist in solving the case until we have an answer or we know the reason why we don't."

Getting to the bottom of puzzling cases is Hillis' passion and, like all successful sleuths, his success lies in stringing together clues.

"I begin by asking questions – lots of questions – you have to be a good listener," says Hillis. "By hearing a patient's story, I can determine many seemingly unrelated things which affect their health."

Whether the patient is in emotional distress, may be suffering from a metabolic disorder or has taken a recent fall, all answers add another piece to the puzzle. When strung together, these clues can point the way to a solution.

"Too often, doctors don't take the time to listen to a patient, Hillis explains, "so hidden health problems remain hidden. I take my time to get a complete picture."

Hillis had another goal in mind when he began his studies in the health field. As a student at City College in New York, he decided to become a researcher in pharmacology, but after spending time with a graduate student in that specialty, Hillis changed his mind. "It was very lonely work," he recalls. "I discovered I wanted to work with people, not mice."

He made the switch to the study of Chiropractic, attending the Columbia Institute of Chiropractic, graduating as a Doctor of Chiropractic (DC). As part of his training, Hillis studied nutrition as a vital component in the fight against illness.

"I was an avid follower of Dr. Carlton Fredericks and Dr. Robert Atkins, two pioneers in the field of nutritional support," says Hillis.

He incorporated such holistic ideas into his practice when he hung out his own shingle in Ft. Lee, NJ in 1976, after working for one year at the Feit Clinic in New York, a complementary medicine practice specializing in natural medicine therapeutics for degenerative diseases. "I had many patients who exhibited general malaise, fatigue or stress. Their symptoms either presented at the spine or were

more constitutional.” Explains Hillis. “For example, the patient could be ‘short-circuiting’ from their nervous system being under stress. That stress sends signals through an organ, such as their adrenal gland. When the adrenal gland is stressed, the nerves from that gland will send signals which show up in the spine. Such signals indicate that there’s trouble afoot.”

Hillis discovered that such stress is often caused by food allergies.

One patient had traveled doctor to doctor with a repetitive laryngeal spasm, commonly know as a “tic” of the throat muscles. No one seemed able to help and Hillis was the man’s last resort. While listening to the patient’s history, Hillis discovered that the man had grown up on a dairy farm and drank a gallon of milk a day. The doctor then conducted a careful spinal nerve evaluation, a comprehensive food allergy, blood, intercellular mineral and vitamin tests and determined that, not only was the patient allergic to milk, the oddly enough, was deficient in calcium, causing nerve irritability.

“Within one week of beginning non-dairy calcium supplements and removing milk from his diet, his symptoms were completely gone and he could hold an adjustment better,” says Hillis.

A careful assembled case history is not the only weapon in Hillis’ arsenal.

“I conduct a thorough physical exam, including a comprehensive examination of the surface of the body which includes nerve tracing,” he explains. “For instance, if the musculature in the pad of the palm near the thumb become hard, fibrous and tender, it may be a sign of trouble with the nerve pathways that are related to sugar-handling stress. Blood sugar and glucose tolerance tests may be needed to further confirm the diagnosis.

The findings are incorporated with all the other clues and the patient’s care is managed around the entire body of evidence.”

Dr. Hillis utilizes a blend of Applied Kinesiology and Sacro Occipital Technique (SOT) as his chiropractic methods of choice in guiding him through very exacting adjustive sessions with his patients. After a careful spinal, cranial and extremity exam, the information obtained from the muscular system helps him understand how the patient’s nervous system is interacting with both their internal and external environments. **“A patient can be chiropractically adjusted hundreds of times, but the adjustment will not ‘stick’ until the underlying cause for their condition is discovered.” says Dr. Daniel P. Hillis, DC.** “That’s why the physical examination tailored to the individual, it is so important. A ‘canned exam’ can result in a physician overlooking a treasure cove of clues.”

Such careful investigation of the spine, extremities and cranium, when combined with the knowledge gained form the case history and nutritional information, fills in the pieces of the health puzzle.

Dr. Hillis’ dogged approach offers help to everyone from professional athletes and weekend golfers to ballet dancers to infants.

“My patients understand the value of good health and are motivated to get well,” says Hillis. “Solving the clinical mystery is an enjoyable challenge and helping people heal is a distinct privilege.”

NAPLES NATURAL MEDICINE & DIAGNOSTICS / PAIN RELIEF CENTER, P.A. | DR. DANIEL P. HILLIS
Chiropractic Physician | 840 Anchor Rode Drive Naples, Florida 34103 | 239-597-3929 | naplesnaturalhealth.com

Kitt Walsh, freelance writer
with A Way With Words