

A new model for baby boomer healthcare

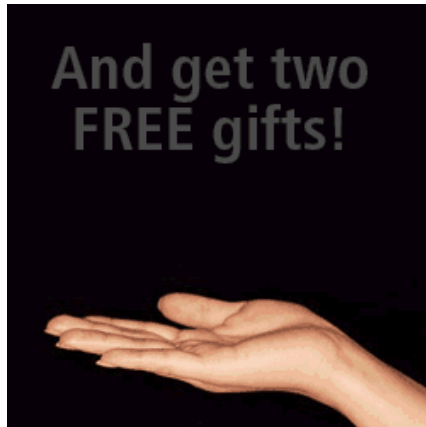
By Ronald Grisanti, DC, DABCO, MS

An innovative approach to healthcare is revolutionizing the diagnosis and treatment of a multitude of health challenges facing the baby boomer population. This new model of healthcare is termed *functional diagnostic medicine* and offers a fresh perspective on the management of your most difficult cases.

If you have been in practice for more than a few years, you have likely had your share of cases that simply did not respond to traditional chiropractic treatment, adjustments and therapy. The functional medicine approach can add a new and exciting dimension to your practice and open doors for helping your "graying" patients achieve optimal health and fitness.

Like chiropractic adjustments, which focus on the relationship between spinal function and health, functional medicine focuses on the relationship between health and biological, biochemical and psychological function. Each treatment is a highly customized process; two people with the same diagnosis may require different diagnostic tests and therapeutic interventions.

Many chiropractors pride themselves (and rightly so) on their ability to help patients with the typical back and neck problems. However, they face challenges with such debilitating ailments as fibromyalgia, diabetes, hypertension, irritable bowel syndrome and arthritis. Practicing functional diagnostic medicine is a way to expand services and treat a diversified number of conditions.



WHAT IS IT?

Functional diagnostic medicine is a growing field and a giant step forward in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of many chronic diseases. Unlike the traditional disease-specific approach, which is focused on *symptoms*, functional medicine sheds light on the causes. This integrative approach does not merely call for multiple standard medical tests, but goes to the next level, investigating the biochemical and metabolic "glitches" likely to cause disease processes.

It integrates the individual's environmental inputs, which include diet, nutrients (including air and water), exercise, trauma, genetic predispositions, attitudes and beliefs into the diagnostic assay.

Armed with both the knowledge of an individual's environmental inputs and the results of standard medical tests, physicians can develop individualized — patient-specific — treatment protocols to reverse, stop or prevent a disease and its related symptoms.

The following case studies show the medical detective work involved in the diagnosis and treatment of two common conditions:

CASE 1

A 51-year-old female with an 11-year history of irritable bowel syndrome and fatigue had consulted with four medical physicians.

- **Traditional medical approach.** Medical testing included an upper and lower GI study and colonoscopy. All found negative for any pathologies. Treatment consisted of the prescription hyoscyamine.

Results were poor.

• **Functional medical approach.** Following an extensive history and review of her medical records, a digestive stool test and an allergy blood test were done. Two bacterial pathogens were found: *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Citrobacter freundii*. The medical literature clearly linked these pathogens to diarrhea disease. An allergy test revealed a significant sensitivity to gluten and rice.

The patient was prescribed a natural pharmaceutical that helped eradicate the two bacterial pathogens and was placed on an elimination diet addressing the rice and gluten. After one month, she was symptom-free.

CASE 2

A 53-year-old female with menopausal symptoms including hot flashes, decreased libido and weight gain for a period of five years had consulted with only one medical physician.

• **Traditional medical approach.** No medical tests were performed. Treatment consisted of the prescription Estrace. Results were fair; however, the patient was concerned about the potential side effects.

• **Functional medical approach.** Following an extensive history and review of her medical records, a female hormonal panel was ordered. Result: Tests showed that the estrogen-progesterone balance was significantly compromised — too much estrogen and not enough progesterone. This was the main cause of the patient's mood swings.

This test result was presented to her medical physician and she was prescribed the proper balance of therapeutic hormones. The patient eventually went to a compounding pharmacy for a customized formula of estrogen and progesterone. She has been symptom-free and experiencing an increase in energy. In addition, she has lost 54 pounds in eight months.

THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

By addressing each individual's unique biochemical composition, identifying the underlying causes of chronic health conditions and reducing the risk of degenerative disease, functional medicine has been recognized as the future of medicine. Today, specialized laboratories using advanced testing procedures offer functional diagnostic assessments are dedicated to evaluating an individual's physiology.

By comparing the individual's assessments with normal physiological ranges, doctors practicing functional diagnostic medicine can pinpoint abnormalities and factors that contribute to health problems, often exposing the real causes of chronic illness and degenerative disease.

If you have a passion to help the chronically ill and the desire to position yourself as "the doctor to see" in your community, learn everything you can about functional diagnostic medicine.

Want more information on functional medicine?

If you want more information on functional medicine, here are some resources:

- www.functionalmedicinei.com
- Great Smokies Diagnostic Laboratory ACE (Achieving Clinical Excellence) Program, www.gsdl.com/home. GSDL specializes in functional diagnostics. Its ACE program provides an overview of functional medicine.

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