

Unit 1. Introduction to Herbal Medicine:

This Unit consists of one module only and comprises:

- i) Introduction to the Course: A review of the course structure and content, the Reference Sources and Book list, dates for practical and field sessions, assignment topics and due dates, how to submit assessments & assignments.
- ii) Enhanced Study Skills: how to take notes from lectures and information source materials, revising information and memory aids, good study habits including being organized & consistent.
- iii) Brief examination of the history of European Herbal Medicine including the many uses of plants and the influences of famous herbal physicians over the past 2,000 years.
- iv) **Do you think Herbal medicine has a place in the context of 'Modern' chemical interventionist medicine and if so, how? Can both systems work effectively together?**

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Part i) **REFERENCE SOURCES AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS FOR UNIT 1**

Griggs, Barbara (1981) Green Pharmacy: a History of Herbal Medicine

Grossinger, Richard, (2001) Planet Medicine: Origins, Revised Edition: Origins

Illich, Ivan (1971) Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health.

Kerr, Ralph Whiteside (1969) Herbalism Through the Ages

Stuart, Malcolm (1982) The Colour Dictionary of Herbs and Herbalism

Please note: further Reference sources will be provide next lecture.

DATES FOR FIELD TRIPS

- Unit 5.3 Plant Identification (Field Trip Local) **Monday 29/03/2021**
- Unit 5.4 Growing Medicinal Plants (Field Trip to Mt Annan & Mt Tomah) **Monday 4/10/2021**
- Unit 7.1 Harvesting & Preserving Medicinal Plants **Monday 12/04/2021**
- Unit 7.2 Manufacturing tinctures, creams, etc (both local to Kurrajong) **Monday 14/06/2021**
- Unit 9 Australian Indigenous Medicinal & Foods Plants & their uses (Field Trip to Muru Mittigar) **Monday 29/11/2021**

ASSIGNMENT TOPICS AND DUE DATES

Unit 3 Anatomy & Physiology

- Ongoing week-by-week short questionnaire to be submitted on a weekly basis, commencing as of Week 6.
- **Ensure that all questionnaires are submitted by the conclusion of the course.**

Unit 5.3 Plant Identification

- Create your Herbarium of 12 dried medicinal plants that you have either grown in your own garden or that you have wild harvested. Select plants that demonstrate 6 different plant families. Each plant represented should clearly show leaf, stem/branch, flower and fruiting parts. The following information should also be provided on the same mounting sheet, under the specimen:
- Order, Family, Genus, Species, date collected, location collected, collected by.
- **Submission date: last week of September, 2021**

Unit 6 Materia Medica

- Describe the properties, constituents and uses of 4 medicinal plants of your choice that have been discussed in the Materia Medica section. You may also include a drawing or photo of the medicinal plants you choose.
- Word limit: 1200
- **Submission date: 1/11/2021**

Unit 8 Food as Medicine

- A friend asks you to help them overcome their tendency to eczema using a dietary approach.
- Describe what eczema is and how it can be identified. Describe what information you would need to obtain from them so you can determine the best dietary approach for them.
- What herbs and food plants would you recommend to them? In your recommendation include ways in which they could prepare the food, how often

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they should eat the food on a daily basis and what they should avoid eating to help reduce the eczema attacks.

HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS

Please see separate document

Part ii) ENHANCED STUDY SKILLS

Please see separate document

Part iii) HISTORY OF HERBALISM

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EUROPEAN MEDICINE

The 'pre-historic' use of plants as medicines, food, clothing, shelter and in art and ceremony has been discovered globally from archeological excavations, surveys and through the interview processes of anthropologists.

The beneficial and detrimental properties of plants were most likely discovered by humans through trial and error, instinctive eating as well as the observation of animals as they grazed and foraged during health and illness. In addition, many generations of traditional cultural uses developed the relationship between humans and plants, with these uses being passed on as oral history and through cultural art.

In pre-Christian Europe, herbal medicine was practiced by people whose philosophy of healing, like their philosophy of life, was greatly influenced by their religious and spiritual beliefs.

The Herbal medicine that we mostly experience in the 21st Century has evolved out of the European traditions and it seems appropriate to review a few of the most famous Herbalists in European medical history and the most significant social changes over the past 2,000 years to inform our knowledge and understanding of where we are and how we got here.

HIPPOCRATES THE GREAT

In Ancient Greece, religion was a combination of pantheism and **Vitalism**.

In pantheism the Gods were seen to be the precursors to humankind and occasionally intervened in the daily life and destiny of humans to their benefit or detriment. In return, humans placated the Gods through regular festivals, rituals and sanctification in their honour.

Born on the Greek island of Cos in around 460BC, Hippocrates was from a long tradition of physicians called the Aesculepieads. The Aesculepieads were regarded as descendants of Aesculepios, himself a living physician, later deified as the Greek God of Medicine and Healing.

Hippocrates travelled widely throughout south-eastern Europe and Asia Minor and later taught at the Medical School at Cos. He was a famous physician in his own time and was

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described by Plato as “a famous Aesculepiad who has a philosophical approach to medicine”.

Hippocrates regarded the body in a wholistic way, claiming that all parts are connected and affect each other in both health and disease. He stated that a primary cause of disease was due to ‘undigested residues that excreted vapours into the body’ producing ill-health and disease. Many writings on medicine, known as the Hippocratic Collection, have been attributed to Hippocrates; many showing advanced scientific thought and skill in clinical observation. The Collection includes writings on anatomy, clinical practice, diseases of women and children, prognosis, treatment by diet and botanical drugs, surgery and medical ethics. One treatise, called “Ancient Medicine”, estimated to have been written in 5th century BC, discusses the way in which the art of healing is studied, the importance of diet and that what is good for one person may not be good for another and what is good at one time may not be useful at another time.

Another volume is called “Air, waters and Places” discusses the effects of these three environmental factors upon general health. He states that diseases and proneness to diseases may be caused by extreme weather, local climate and the nature of the source of water supply. The book also discusses the influence of climatic effects on the formation of national characteristics.

Hippocrates also wrote extensively on “Epidemics” and his most famous work “Aphorisms” discusses prognosis (the way in which disease processes develop and the outcomes of them). One of the first aphorisms states:

“Life is short, art is long; opportunity is elusive, experiment is dangerous, judgment is difficult. It is not enough for the physician to do what is necessary, but the patient and the attendant must do their part as well and circumstances must be favourable”.

Another aphorism states: “Desperate cases need the most desperate remedies”.

Hippocrates believed that the human body to be largely self-healing and required little intervention from drugs and a proper regime (lifestyle) to restore health.

Another theory expounded by Hippocrates was the “Elemental” or “Humours” Theory. In his own words he states: “The human body contains blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile: these constitute the nature of the body and through them a man suffers pain or enjoys health. A man enjoys the most perfect health when these elements are duly proportioned to one another in power, bulk and manner of compounding so that they are mingled as excellently as possible. Pain is felt when one of these elements is either

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deficient or excessive, or when it is isolated in the body without being compounded with the others”.

Despite the lack of detailed anatomical and physiological knowledge and lack of sophisticated technology, it is possible that the success of the ancient medical schools was due to the application of the “Humours Theory”. This theory shifted the reality of the physician to a more intuitive approach, weaving the knowledge of the Gods into the texture of the physicians mind (Grossinger, 2001).

The Hippocratic physician observed the character of the disease and interceded at points of crisis or the “critical days” with a ‘sympathetic medicine’ to aid the healing process, not interrupt it. The Hippocratic physician strove to strengthen the body, not weaken it. He had to choose the correct remedy at the right time. He had to distinguish between acute disease (which is a healthy reaction to a pathological process) and sub-acute disease as a sign of weakening vital force in the patient.

Diseases generally were not suppressed; they were encouraged to run their course.

Knowledge of physiology as we know it today was very basic and largely inaccurate. In a sense the elemental theory replaced any need for physiology as we know as it provided a simple explanation for the cause of diseases. Anatomy was observed via the treatment of injuries as dissection of corpses was against the principles of the Asclepiad tradition. Two further works by Hippocrates, “On Fractures” and “Joints”, are still considered seminal works on these subjects. The work “Joints” is concerned with the reduction of a dislocation of a joint and the use of the Hippocratic Bench – a kind of early Chiropractor’s couch.

Hippocrates writing on “Wounds in the Head” has an accurate account of the cranial sutures and the treatment of skull contusions and fissures by trephine. Various works on gynecology and obstetrics, also display a great empirical knowledge.

The relationship between medicine and religion in Hippocratic School is fascinating and difficult. There was already rivalry and distrust among medical professionals and ‘spiritual healers’ of the times.

Hippocrates himself attacked ‘quacks’ and ‘witch-doctors’ and rejected the notion that disease was a divine punishment, saying: “it is the deity which purifies, sanctifies and cleanses us from the greatest and most unholy of our sins”.

When writing about Hippocrates and physicians of his time, historians most often seem condescending and skeptical of the philosophical and religious influences in those

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ancient healing traditions. The historians talk about the inter-relationship of medicine and religion as if the healers of the time were poor, ignorant babbling fools. It is my opinion that even though many of the physicians of the times may have been 'charlatans and peddlers of superstition (as are some today) there is no doubt in this author's mind that the serious and scientifically minded healers (such as Hippocrates) had a psychic sensitivity due largely to their acknowledgement of the metaphysical aspects of existence: that humans are more than flesh and blood; that humans are composed of interdependent and ever-changing energies in endless combinations of air, fire, water, earth and ether; that all things are pervaded by life force and finally that there is a reality that cannot be measured in our everyday understanding of scientific scrutiny. Rather, this reality can be shown to be an intrinsic factor in the maintenance of health and cure of disease.

Finally, the most famous teachings of Hippocrates are found in the "Hippocratic Oath" still sworn today at the graduation of many medical students. In the Hippocratic Oath, the graduate physician swears upon the gods and goddesses of healing and health to respect and support their teacher and their teachers family,

To teach the art of healing to their offspring without fee, to act only for the benefit of patients and never to give deadly medicines or to take life, to live a pure life, never to practice anything that they have no training in (such as surgery) but to refer patients to those who are skilled in such medical practice. Further, to avoid criminal activities and never to engage in sexual practices with patients or to gossip about things seen and heard of the private lives of others. Finally that breaking any part of this oath the physician vows to call upon his peers to remove his status as a healer.

GALEN OF PERGAMON

Acclaimed as the greatest of physicians after Hippocrates, Galen was born in 129BC into a privileged life. Galen is famous as the founder of the science of Experimental Physiology and expanded on the existing knowledge of anatomy and completely reclassified the *Materia Medicae* of his day. His early education was largely philosophical and at the age of 18 he became interested in medicine. His education and experience was very broad and the influences of his early education were apparent in the eclectic style of his many writings on medicine. In 150AD Galen wrote a philosophical treatise called "A Medical Experience". He travelled extensively in Asia Minor and later studied

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medicine in the Medical School of Alexandria where he practiced dissection of animals, particularly monkeys, from which he drew comparisons to human anatomy (often erroneously).

At the time of Galen, Alexandria was the centre of Greek science and medicine. In 157AD he returned to Pergamon and became a medical attendant to gladiators and athletes – a post that gave him an opportunity to gain further knowledge of medicine and surgery. In 159AD while experimenting on pigs, Galen discovered the action of the nerves that control vocalization and the complex action of the respiratory muscles.

In 162AD he practiced medicine in Rome under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and became highly successful by taking on ‘incurable’ patients and curing them!

His revised *Materia Medicae* was rewritten to correspond to his revised version of the “Four Humours Theory”. He also discarded the Hippocratic approach to herbalism which used simples and replaced these with highly complex compounds containing not only botanical drugs but also animal and mineral sourced drugs which became known as “Galenicals”.

Galen differed from Hippocrates in that he believed in the intervention of the course of a disease using large doses of complicated drug mixtures as a means to correcting body imbalances. His new rendition of the *Materia Medica* was called “*De Simplicibus*” and became the prototype for all subsequent *Materia Medicae*.

Most herbals after Galen are based upon his work which was regarded as almost infallible in the East and the West until well into the 16th Century.

Galen was described as a highly scientific, methodical and dogmatic thinker. He had boundless self-confidence, a characteristic together with his rigid and elaborate medical system and the socio-political climate of the time that contributed to that paralysis of European scientific thought for the following 1500 years.

His most influential work was “*Method of Healing*” in which he discusses the use of Galenicals. Much of the anatomical terminology in use today comes directly from Galen and Latin translations of the terminology he employed.

He based his *Descriptive Anatomy* on the dissection of ‘lower’ animals and through this work distinguished 7 pairs of Cranial Nerves, described the valves of the heart and observed the structural differences between the veins and the arteries. His other writings include pathology, hygiene, dietetics, therapeutics, pharmacy, medical polemics and commentaries on the Hippocratic writings.

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He wrote major works on “Anatomical Procedure”, on “the Movement of the Muscles” and on “The Anatomy of the Veins and Arteries”. Before anything else Galen was an experimenter, demonstrator and a teacher. Due to the unrest in the Roman Empire at the time his work was not continued and after his death in 200AD experimental physiology was not practiced for many centuries. Galen’s thinking exercised a profound influence on Byzantine and Islamic civilisations and contributed substantially to the rise of Western Science during the Renaissance.

Galen was not a monotheist and believed in gods and goddesses, the four elements and in the existence of ‘pneuma’ or life force as the basic food that kept the spirit of man alive.

Galen’s influence marked the end of the Hippocratic School and the art of healing became more and more like a theoretical hobby than a practical science.

CHANGING WORLD-CHANGING MEDICINE

Promoted by Hippocrates (the ‘Father of Medicine’), Vitalism was the underlying explanation of Creation, based upon the concept that the Universal matter arises out of the four elements: Air, Fire, Water and Earth: the various combinations of these elements creating everything from spirit energy to gross physical matter.

In North-western Europe, **Nature Worship** and related Gods (such as Wodin, Thor and the Valkyrie) was wide spread. The practice of medicine/healing was based upon ‘nature cure’ in which natural healing processes were allowed to run their course without intervention or suppression of symptoms.

This holistic approach applied physical therapies, ritual, incantation and spells thus treating the physical and psyche of the individual.

The Druid Priests of Pre-Roman Britain developed a sophisticated healing system and had a long-established School of Medicine in Myddfai, Wales. Knowledge was also shared with the wise herb-men and women in remote areas who also had knowledge of local healing plants. This model of healing continued until the withdrawal of Rome from Britain in 300AD.

During this period thinking was eclectic and open, travelling from Europe to the far reaches of Asia was easy and the Greek language was spoken universally. There were many itinerant teachers, students and preachers of new religions and pilgrims. The

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Roman Empire was a melting pot for many different cultures, religions, philosophies, cultures and ideas.

Galen of Pergamon (131-200AD) was a Roman physician who promoted his own rationalistic and dogmatic theories on health, disease and healing. Galen's influence super-ceded that of Hippocrates and the simple Vitalist approach to healing gradually was replaced by a more theoretical and less practical view.

However, the reach of the Roman Empire was too great, and its leadership weak. An effective tactic of the Romans when invading a country or region was to station armies in situ and allow them to integrate with the locals. Over time this became a problem as the Roman garrisons began to feel greater loyalty to their new families, friends and allies.

A major event following the demise of the Roman Empire was the rise of Christianity in all of Europe, led by Peter the Apostle who established his Church in Rome, the centre of power, corruption and decadence in Europe and Asia Minor at this time. The successors of Peter the Apostle absorbed much of Roman civil and temple culture with the Church itself modeled upon the Roman Empire.

Christianity became a popular movement primarily among slaves, freedmen and labourers with only a few wealthy or privileged followers at this time.

Although still a minority religion in the scheme of things, Christianity became a valuable political and strategic tool during the times of unrest on the borders of the Roman Empire.

The Christian view of healing as it developed from the original teachings of Christ, was based upon faith that Jesus would heal all ills from blindness to leprosy. All other forms of healing either with herbs or through supplication to Gods was strongly discouraged.

The single 'opponent' to Christianity was the 'new paganism' – called Neo-Platonism.

Neo-Platonism was a naturalistic, rational polytheism based upon Vitalism – a marvelous mixture of philosophy and religion with a belief in a higher, purer and more estimable self than the physical body. This self became one with the 'god head' via the soul leading to salvation. The various Gods and deities were regarded as representative of the same Godhead, so it was really monotheistic. Advocates of Neo-Platonism regarded Christianity as elitist and the concepts of creation and the end of the world as irreligious. Those who practiced Nature Cure medicine were eventually facing a rising tide of rational dogmatic medicine.

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By the 4th century AD Christianity controlled public opinion. The sons of the Emperor Constantine proposed to destroy **Paganism** by legislation as it was viewed as the first steps towards anarchy. Gradually, pagan festivals and rites in town and country were reconciled with prevailing Christian sentiments and 'heathen myths' were Christianized. Christian monasticism spread throughout Europe as the Roman Empire eroded and the Church took over the responsibilities of governance in far-away frontiers of the Empire. This included the development of education for monks and the development of monastic medicine as evidenced by the herbals "The Leech Book of Bald" and "Herbarium" by Apuleius Platonicus in 900 AD. The School of Medicine in Myddfai Wales flourished producing the first pharmacopeia based on the therapeutic use of herbs in the 13th Century.

In southern Europe and Asia Minor the influence of Arabic medicine was being felt as invasions from the Middle East slowly advanced into the Mediterranean region. Arab medicine, known as **Unani medicine**, was based more on pharmacy and the use of inorganic chemicals and complex compounds.

By 700AD the Arabs and Turks had gained supremacy in the Mediterranean region, capturing many Graeco-Roman medical texts and techniques, thus influencing their own medicine. However, during the panic of the Arab invasions, many remaining texts were taken into protective custody in Christian monasteries. The Holy Wars (867-1050 AD) marked the years that followed and the development of European medicine stagnated. The monasteries took over the primary role of 'carers of the sick' as part of their mission and some monks even became proficient herbalists. During the Dark Ages the Christian Church was the primary force holding Europe together, educating many and law keeping, as the Roman Empire gradually withdrew support from the areas they had invaded.

By the 12th Century AD the thirst for knowledge in Europe reasserted itself signaling the birth of the Renaissance. The study of medicine received a new and powerful impetus from Arabic medicine; wandering students and teachers could be seen on the roads and guilds of learners and teachers formed and evolved into "Universities" and Cathedral schools.

The teachings given were largely based on the approaches of Hippocrates, Galen and the Unani School. The Universities were under the direction of the Catholic Church and were a response also to the growing need for doctors, lawyers and educated clergy.

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The education provided was based upon Christian values and morals which unfortunately censored the writings of great scholars such as Aristotle: the knowledge contained in many ancient pre-Christian scholarly and religious texts was lost as these documents were enthusiastically rewritten during the long years of the Dark Ages. With the fall of Rome, the naturalistic approach to healing and medicine was suppressed along with Neo-Platonist philosophy.

In remote areas folk medicine was still widely used but many wise-woman healers took great risks and were often accused of heresy and witchcraft.

Centuries of biased thinking have led to the suppression of traditional herbalism and the rigid adherence to theory that does not acknowledge practical evidence.

Revolutionary Herbalists such as Paracelsus, Culpepper and Thomson were persecuted because of their practice of traditional Herbalism with roots in the Vitalist and Nature Cure philosophies. For example, Paracelsus was an alchemist who openly defied the decrees of the Catholic Church, Nicholas Culpepper was an astrologer and Samuel Thomson was openly defiant to the accepted medical practices of his day and embraced the Vitalist approach to healing.

NICHOLAS CULPEPPER (1616-1654)

The son of a Surrey Rector, Nicholas Culpepper was educated at Cambridge University in England where he began to study medicine, but discontinued studies after the death of his fiancée. After this he developed an interest in astrology and began an apprenticeship with a London apothecary, much to the dismay of his family.

After a couple of years he set up his own 'shop' in a London slum called Spitalfields where he was soon dispensing his knowledge and herbs. His main clientele were the sick poor, whom he often refused payment and never sold them expensive imported or toxic drugs but encouraged them to use "cheap but wholesome drugs from their own gardens". Culpepper was an extremely popular and successful herbalist - clearly a humanitarian and an idealist.

He deplored the manner in which the established medical profession of the time ignored the medical needs of the poor, the manner in which highly toxic and expensive drugs were prescribed willy-nilly and with little to no skill. Realizing that he could make no head way trying to re-educate the established medical profession, Culpepper

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campaigning single-handed to improve the knowledge of his fellow apothecaries. He did this by translating the London Pharmacopeia from secretive Latin into English, making criticisms, corrections and amendments where he considered necessary and renaming it “The Physical Directory” – it was published in 1649.

He made frequent attacks on the London College of Physicians in regard to their lack of medical treatment available to those who could not afford to pay for it, their use of dangerous drugs and for omitting to list the more freely available, safer and cheaper English herbs and their virtues in the Pharmacopeia.

The medical profession responded by denigrating Culpepper’s way of life and appearance, but could do nothing to him legally due to the existence of the “Herbalists’ Charter of Rights” which had been drawn up in 1540 by King Henry VIII.

In 1651 Culpepper published “The English Physician” which gave a new and more scientific view of English Herbalism. Culpepper believed that disease occurred largely due to the influence of certain astrological alignments and he consulted the motion of the planets when prescribing each herb. Taking into account that each herb was affected by its ruling planet, as was each part of the human body and each disease, he would prescribe the herbs in the ‘house’ opposite to that which caused the disease. Thus by sympathy, each house could cure its own disease.

Culpepper’s translation of the British Pharmacopeia reinforced the domestic herbal medicine tradition in England that was under threat from the new ‘mineral’ medicine of the orthodox school. In Culpepper’s time the medicine practiced by the established medical profession were fairly unstable ; despite this, mineral medicine (i.e. use of antimony and arsenic) was fast taking hold, whilst purging and blood letting were still the main therapies used.

Culpepper strengthened and refined the already established tradition of domestic herbal medicine and made apothecaries the accepted dispensers-practitioners to the poor.

SAMUEL THOMSON (1969-1843)

Samuel Thomson was an American 19th Century Herbalist. Unlike Culpepper, he came from a poor background, his father being an illiterate New Hampshire farmer who was a harsh religious fanatic. Samuel was born with a physical disability and was a sickly child.

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Eventually his father took him to a herb-doctor by the name of Widow Benton and gradually his health improved; he also became fascinated by herbs and their medicinal uses.

At 21 years of age, Samuel saw his mother pass away from a complication of measles, known as 'galloping consumption' (what we now would call pneumonia). This occurred as a direct result of inept medical care involving the prescription of mercury, opium and vitriol. Soon after, Samuel saw the intense suffering of his wife during childbirth and would have lost his 2-year old daughter from 'canker rash' if he had not intervened using folk medicine.

From this point on he began to use his knowledge of herbal medicine to help treat illnesses in his friends, neighbours and family.

The essential basis of Thomson's therapy was to restore body 'heat' using steam therapy and sweating as well as administering emetic herbs like Lobelia inflata, following up with supportive herbs when the crisis had passed.

He never used mineral poisons, strong purgatives or bled his patients.

Thomson re-introduced the concept of Nature Cure to medicine of his time. He developed a regular series of Courses of Medicine, differing according to the disorder but basically containing Lobelia inflata to **induce vomiting**, cayenne to **restore body heat** and steam baths to induce **perspiration**. It is thought that many of Thomson's techniques were based upon native American medicine, although Thomson never recorded this himself.

He often made scathing attacks on the established physicians of the time and criticized their treatment methods making him very unpopular with the medical establishment. In 1808 he was accused of sweating two children to death and in 1809 he was imprisoned and tried on a charge of murdering a young man by the administration of Lobelia.

He was technically acquitted of this charge and attempted to sue the doctor who brought the charge against him without success, ruining his reputation and draining his bank account. It appeared that Thomson was the victim of a plot against him by various members of the medical establishment. Even the Chief Justice of the court was bribed into falsifying records against him.

Many states in the US legislated against Thomson specifically from practicing and others restricted the practice of unqualified practitioners.

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In order to safe guard his own livelihood and the future of American herbalism, Thomson patented his knowledge as a “System of Practice”. The System consisted of 4 separate courses of medicine with detailed lists of herbs and the compositions of each. In each city he appointed an agent to promote the **Thomsonian System** who received a commission, and a percentage of the profits. Some agents opened infirmaries where people could come and undergo the treatments under supervision.

People were encourage to buy “Family Rights” a booklet written by Thomson explaining that people could legally care for their loved ones themselves by following his instructions and using his Courses of Medicine. He also wrote “The New Guide to Health” and “The Botanic Family Physician”.

Thomson’s system of self-motivated health care appealed to the simple working man and by 1803 and the opening up of the new frontier with the Louisiana Purchase was quickly adopted by the self-reliant common man of the time.

By 1835 the State of Mississippi could say that half of its population depended upon Thomsonian practitioners, as it was for several other states.

The medical establishment was up in arms against the Thomsonian System and Thomson’s attempts to prove his system worked to no avail. Thomson would not back down but this led to his downfall with one of his own faction establishing the “Botanico-Medical School and Infirmary” in Columbus Ohio and the “Independent Thomsonian Botanic Society”.

Thomson viewed this as betrayal and soon his health deteriorated. In 1843 Samuel Thomson died of a debilitating illness in 1843.

Although Thomson fought bitterly to establish domestic herbal medicine in the New World, he was defeated. There was no well-established herbal medicine tradition in the US at that time; no-one was interested in the indigenous herbal medicine practiced by the native Americans; the new settlers at the time of the Louisana Purchase were disinclined to go against the accepted order and there was already an established monopoly of mineral medicine imported from Europe.

Thomson’s clinical approach to herbal medicine differed from Culpepper’s but they both agreed that the simple cures were the most effective, that nature should be aided and not hindered, that the use of inorganic poisonous mineral drugs and blood letting was dangerous, barbarous and ineffective.

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Where Culpepper was a mystic and an idealist, Thomson was a pragmatist and down-to-earth. Culpepper was an educated, scientific-minded chemist; Thomson had no formal theoretical training but was an intuitive healer and had learned his art from old-school herbalists.

Samuel Thomson established the tradition of natural medicine and nature cure in America where the most influential form of medicine at the time was from the Allopathic School that used purging and bleeding as its basis for therapy.

Thomson's work provided the foundation upon which American Naturopathy was to be built.

HERBAL MEDICINE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The 1960's, 70's and 80's witnessed a gradual but sure revival in herbal medicine as a form of primary health care.

The medicine of the 1920's, 30's, 40's and 50's gave birth to the 'wonder drugs', 'magic bullets' and surgical innovations were under pressure. It became increasingly apparent that the fruits of the last century's earlier medical achievements were being reaped in the form of **iatrogenic diseases**, i.e. diseases resulting from medical intervention in a previously existing disease process.

Medicine today is based largely on the use of drug therapy, technological diagnostic methods and surgical interventions. Many of these methods are still relatively experimental today, the long-term effects of which are as yet unknown.

Furthermore, many of these treatment methods are intended to palliate or mitigate symptoms only rather than affect the underlying cause of the disease.

Sometimes diseases return in an altered and more difficult to treat form, unnecessary surgery can worsen a condition either through complications or decreasing the vitality of the patient, narcotic drugs are not only addictive but also have other side effects that further worsen the underlying imbalances.

Social and academic exclusivity protect the members of the medical profession from criticism and from interference from 'outsiders'. Despite numerous questionable results of medical practices, the medical profession has successfully established itself as an untouchable medical priesthood.

Medical students undergo intense conditioning during their medical training which reinforces the barriers between patient and physician. The ability of the individual to heal

him or herself may be frowned upon and individuals may find themselves coerced into accepting procedures and treatments that they do not really wish to have.

Medical methods are approached as if they are top-secret information and diagnostic methods are becoming more and more computer based. Medical language remains as incomprehensible as Ancient Egyptian to the lay-person.

The medical herbalist is tolerated at best and despised at worst by allopathic physicians. For this author, after 40 years in practice as a medical herbalist, very little has changed despite all the 'hoops' my profession has jumped through to gain acceptance into mainstream medicine over those years.

Although the 1980's showed promise of better things to come – well this was not to be...

HERBAL MEDICINE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By the late 1980's and early 1990's both in Australia, Europe, the United Kingdom and the USA moves were afoot to rein in the ground-swell of acceptance of herbal medicine amongst populations in those places.

The growing suspicion and concern that chemical medicines and interventionist medicine were more harmful than helpful resulted in an increased demand for Herbal therapy, naturopathy and a more natural approach to treating diseases and improving health outcomes.

Pharmaceutical companies began their own campaign to discover what the interest in herbal medicine was all about. Any herbs that contain interesting and potentially effective constituents came under the microscope; some of these had such interesting compounds that the Pharmaceutical companies declared them unsafe for 'unqualified' prescription. These herbal medicines were restricted to herbalists whilst the PCs studied them and investigated their economic potential at their leisure. In Australia, new legislation was passed and in 1989 the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) was formed as part of the Department of Health. Ostensibly to oversee the development and sale of all therapeutic drugs and appliances, it seemed that medicinal plants came under the greatest scrutiny initially.

At the same time a similar scenario was playing out in Europe with the establishment of the EU Commission on Complementary Medicine which undertook to research and record all medicinal plants used in the European herbal medicine tradition. Medicinal

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plants that did not fill a specific criteria were determined ineffective and thus unworthy of recommendation for use.

What were the criteria? Amazingly, identical to criteria that would be required of chemical drugs, using methods that are not fit for purpose in the case of herbal medicines.

In the USA the FDA also took up the challenge to undermine the increased interest in and desire for herbal medicines, whilst in the UK the NHS and NCCM took on a similar role. In the guise of working to protect the public, these agencies systematically undermined public confidence in herbal medicines, citing adulterants in product, harmful or deadly side effects and substitution of correct species for inferior or wrong species being used in herbal preparations.

In 2017-2018 the Australian Government (under the direction of Greg Hunt) announced that it would no longer subsidize private health insurance companies for complementary medicine modalities such as naturopathy and herbal medicine (and many others as well) due to insufficient evidence-based research to prove that they are effective forms of health care.

Imagine the outcry among so many individual practitioners and consumers of natural medicine in Australia following this action. The outcry has resulted in the Health Minister, Greg Hunt, has implemented a review of this decision – we are still waiting for the result.

The action of removing providers of herbal medicine and naturopathy from private health fund on the spurious claim that they are not effective forms of health care has further damaged the reputations of these two valuable health resources, eroding public confidence in them to an all time low.

This is where we are historically speaking.

At the grass-roots level, people who have used herbal medicine and nature cure approaches know that they work to maintain and restore health and will continue to use these wonderful resources as long as they live.

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