

# The big ship Integrative Medicine – Is homeopathy on board?

*The Richard Hughes Memorial Lecture 2021 by Dr Elizabeth Thompson*

Dr Elizabeth Thompson trained in medicine at Oxford University and completed her clinical training at Guy's Hospital in London. Qualifying in Palliative Medicine, she obtained Membership of the Royal College of Physicians in 1991 and Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) in September 2000. In 2014 she set up the National Centre for Integrative Medicine (NCIM) and is passionate about how bringing conventional, holistic and lifestyle approaches together could transform modern healthcare and create diversity for patients and practitioners. Dr Thompson is part of the new NCIM Holistic Doctor team and is also an experienced Medical Homeopath specialising in women's health including menopause and supporting the health and wellbeing of cancer patients. She has pioneered a new two-year Diploma in Integrative Medicine for healthcare professionals. She is a Board Member of the College of Medicine, European Society of Integrative Medicine and President of the European Congress for Integrative Medicine in London 2021 (<http://ecimcongress.com>). In her lecture she did great justice to the Richard Hughes Memorial lecture tradition by questioning and affirming the role of homeopathy, with a focus on Integrative Medicine.

Dr Thompson opened her lecture by affirming that Dr Hughes was indeed a controversial figure. She went on to suggest he may have been left brain dominant, being analytical and methodical in his thinking: a 'systemized' thinker who considered the concept of the vital force and high dilutions were 'not scientific.' He created a 'battleground' not unlike many of us these days are faced with, Elizabeth, at one stage, being no exception. This conflict prompted her realisation that she needed balance in life. This was possibly a catalyst for the birth of The National Centre for Integrative Medicine, (NCIM) and the now wide range of complementary therapies available to everyone, on 'a 1-1 basis to inspire health and wellbeing.'

Fundamentally, she stated, Integrative Medicine can be described as treatments which:

- Bring together conventional lifestyle and holistic approaches to support wellbeing
- A system of treatment where wellness and resilience are core concepts
- Where balance and vitality are supported
- Reduce disease risk and optimises health
- Is an empowered model offering diversity and choice to patients and clinicians

The 2 Year Master's level Diploma at

NCIM in Integrative Healthcare was then outlined, which draws on other philosophies of health such as Ayurveda, TCM, Naturopathy and Homeopathy. The goal: to encourage balance in the body, activating energy and removing blocks to flow. Details can be found here: <https://ncim.org.uk/training/diploma-in-integrative-healthcare>.



It was stressed during the webinar that the ultimate goal of homeopathy is to achieve a state of health and balance such as that set out in The Organon, §9:

*'In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence.'*

Holistic consulting as opposed to the conventional approach was defined as:

- Working with complexity and depth
- Empathetic listening-unconditional positive regard
- Connecting to a model of wellness rather than illness
- Connecting to a diverse range of interventions

Elizabeth described the Holistic Assessment Tool (HAT) which I found particularly useful, and it would certainly facilitate case taking for many of us. It was described as such:

### Stage 1 [analysis] mapping the predicament.

- What is the problem
- At what 'levels' of the system are the problems situated

- How are these different aspects of the problem interrelated?
- Also, consider the three 'P's – Predisposing, Precipitating and Perpetuating causes.
- Consider temporal relationships and repeating patterns

### HAT-Stage 2 [synthesis] Imagine possible interventions and what effect they may have on the totality of the predicament

It was then discussed that homeopathy deals with the concept of wholeness: the totality of symptoms, whilst 'pattern matching' allows us to 'constellate symptoms and connect to a substance in nature.' Sankaran, according to Elizabeth, allowed us to evolve our understanding of substances in nature through his 'levels,' from 'the tangible to intangible.'

According to Elizabeth Thompson's considerable experience and data the outcome of Integrative Oncology has been helping to reduce treatment side effects and problem symptoms such as hot flushes, sleep and mood disturbance, joint pain and fatigue and importantly, engaging with those with advanced cancer and 'walking alongside them whatever is happening.'

To conclude the webinar, Elizabeth returned to the broad theme of Integrative Medicine, stating there was much we can do to empower the patient, through nutrition, lifestyle advice and the entire gamut of complementary medicines. She stressed that our approach should be individualised and tailored to the patient.

Richard Hughes, who wanted a foot in each camp, was rooted like a tree, whilst being connected to the sky.

She states that we should honour ourselves as homeopaths for:

- Becoming the unprejudiced observer
- Honouring head, heart and gut
- Creating the environment for deeper enquiry
- Holding uncertainty
- Connecting to the person, ourselves and nature
- Believing in the potential for healing and wholeness.



What came over strongly for me was Elizabeth's total commitment to homeopathy, as a fundamental part of an integrated approach. Where asked to omit by various bodies who have invited her to speak, she remains steadfast in its inclusion. To take a stand is what we should all do and learn from; we are after all, masters of our art and are fully aware of its potential.

There was a definite sense of inspiration in the audience and a lively Q&A followed. Dr Gary Smyth observed that there is a feeling that the tide is turning for homeopathy due to patient demand.

I could not help but reflect on the deep parallels between Dr Thompson's work and that of Dr Richard Hughes: to be driven, determined and steadfast in our convictions will ultimately lead us to a place where we can start to achieve our vision of total integration and acceptance in the wider medical field. In the encouraging, yet calming words of a colleague 'ignoring the outside noise and focussing on persistence in what we are doing with diligence and dedication will ultimately pay off for ourselves and homeopathy.'

Gill Graham

## Richard Hughes and his legacy in the Memorial Lecture

Historically, it has always been an honour to be asked to present the Richard Hughes Memorial lecture. Dr Richard Hughes, (1836-1902) was the ninth president of the Faculty, Gary Smyth is 88th, so it shows how deeply embedded in The Faculty's history Dr Richard Hughes is. Hughes held every office in the British Homeopathic Society: Secretary, Editor, Vice-President, President. He was Permanent Secretary of the International Homeopathic Congress for many years. He was the author of scores of papers for English and American journals, and he published massive textbooks going into many editions, being translated into several languages and selling in their thousands. In fact, for thirty years he dominated the homeopathic world. Countless times I have seen him referred to as 'a rebel,' very much like Hahnemann. His legacy is enduring and celebrated yearly by the Faculty who invite the entire homeopathic community to the lectures which inspire in his name.

In the words of Dr RE Dudgeon, 'Dr Hughes was the greatest, ablest, and most faithful exponent of the great therapeutic truth revealed by Dr Hahnemann and the most zealous, enthusiastic, indefatigable, and clear-headed disciple of the illustrious founder of the great medical reformation.' Hughes R. *The Principle and Practice of Homoeopathy*. (8th ed). New Delhi: B Jain Publishers Pvt Ltd; 2011. p. 3-4.

