It’s That Time Again: Integrative Healthcare Symposium 2025, New York Hilton

Try Not To Think of (Poor) Luigi

January 13, 2025 By Mike Barr

The Integrative Healthcare Symposium occurs each February at the New York Hilton (Midtown) and typically features many of the luminaries of the world of functional medicine. (Also sometimes called nutritional medicine, lifestyle medicine, precision medicine, and more recently, even longevity medicine (where maximizing healthspan, after, say 50 or so, is the goal)).

Last year’s summit featured the IFM’s Robert Roundtree, Patrick Hanaway, Jeffrey Bland and (Bastyr University’s, more or less the school of naturopathic medicine in the US, in Kenmore, WA) Joe Pizzorno. This year some household names include: David Perlmutter (“Grain Brain,” 2018), Mark Houston (“The Truth About Heart Disease,” 2022), Sara Gottfried (“The Hormone Cure,” 2014; “Younger,” 2018), and of course, Jeff Bland (“The Disease Delusion,” 2015).

Mark Houston’s 2014 address revolutionized my thinking of how we (mostly mis-) diagnose & (mis-) treat hypertension in this country.

I am particularly happy to see this year a shift away from “early detection” (which in this country is far too often a ruse to drum up business for expensive (but lucrative) & often unnecessary procedures & treatments: see Otis Brawley) of, particularly, men’s and women’s cancers and towards one of more (dare I use the word?) holistic, body-wide prevention. Geo Espinosa is always something of a wild card (talk snippet here), and I do not know much of Tara Scott (snippet here), but have great expectations. Guess we’ll soon know.

Exciting too to see Emeran Mayer (“The Mind-Gut Connection” (2016), “The Gut-Immune Connection” (2021)) in the line-up (snippet of group DGBI talk), as well as integrative psychiatry aka Psychiatry Redefined guru and mentor James Greenblatt— on DE-PRESCRIBING psych meds!!

(snippet here)

(see all of Dr. Greenblatt's titles, on nutritional (& gut/toxin-related) approaches to depression (including anti-depressant withdrawal), to ADHD, to schizophrenia, to anorexia, on nutritional lithium (& amino acids & inositol), including 2 free downloadable ebooks, on functioal psychiatry approaches to anxiety & the prevention of cognitive decline, at this link)

I am particularly happy to see this year a shift away from "early detection" of reproductive cancers and towards one of full-on prevention.

Aly Cohen's "Environmental Toxins & Mental Health" also looks promising (snippet here). As well as Amy Killen's (what looks to be an impassioned) discussion of HRT (snippet here).

And I am always a sucker for an address by Mark Houston (ask me for a recording of (or notes from) his 2014 Integrative Healthcare Symposium talk that revolutionized my thinking of how we (mostly mid-) diagnose & treat hypertension in this country. This year he's focused on coronary artery disease (slash calcification). V.A.B., are you out there? (snippet here)

Oh, oh, oh: and a group discussion of using genetic information (aka genomic testing) in clinical practice (snippet here), even if one of the speakers has a commercial interest in promoting this. I have recently come to think that EVERYONE needs to have this information— if not at birth than certainly by middle school! (Oh, how I could have understood both myself & my "constructive reality" if I had had access to info on my methylation, hormone & detox SNPs when I was 16— instead of 60!) Even if it's not entirely yet ready (but alas, will probably never be) for prime time.

I have recently come to feel that absolutely EVERYONE deserves access to her/his genomic information— if for no other reason than to help to understand (& maybe tweak) one's emotional, mental, and even sexual health.

And we mustn't forget folks still dealing with the sequelae of Covid. Robin Rose does so this year

(snippet here)

A handful of the IFM faculty are here too: Joel Evans, Kara Fitzgerald, David Haase, Deanna Minich.

Finally, I am intrigued by titles with the words or phrases NAD+nitric oxide (snippet), vagus nerve (snippet), the oral microbiome (in regard to women's health: snippet), even vision (snippet), asthma (snippet) and fascia (Hal Blatman (link to his NYC clinic site) still reigns here though!) in them— as well as not one (link to Edwin Lee snippet) but two (link to Haase snippet) talks, apparently, on the use of plasma exchange (David Haase appears to have patented his?) for potential therapeutic applications in neurodegenerative illnesses.

My loyalty, gratitude, and quite frankly, awe in this area, it must be said, still belong to Terry Wahls and Dale Bredesen. (I also love that they both kind of independently arrived at nearly the identical approach: get out the toxins/toxicants (both exogenous & endogenous), support missing nutrients (sometimes also missing (mostly adrenal) hormones), heal & nurture the gut.)

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Strange and possibly a little disconcerting to see CFOs or CMOs of for-profit companies delivering addresses as part of the main program (as opposed to the sponsored satellite symposia (here they're coyly called "Lunch & Learn"), where one would expect to find them): Frank Lipman ("Hearty?", really?), Adam Perlman (even if I am quickly becoming a huge Pendulum (Akkermansia & Clostrium butyricum probiotics, see Feb 2024 paper on CB & HIV) devoté), and Yael Joffe (3x4 Genetics) jump out here.

And we might also include, although it breaks my heart to do so (after all, we're all just trying to eke out an honest, meaningful living, no?), David Haase. But did he have to call it H.O.P.E. ("Habitat Optimizing [sic] Plasma Exchange")? Sounds a bit like good old-fashioned plasmapheresis to me. Anyone old enough to remember that?? (link to his Nashville clinic site & video where he discusses H.O.P.E's potential application in autoimmune diseases (But wait, I thought he said it was for neurodegenerative disorders? I'm confused.); link to general H.O.P.E. info page)

I suppose the IHS has always been first and foremost a trade show.

Conspicuously absent is Mark Hyman. And one would have expected the sometimes disorientingly ever-present Steven Gundry. But I don't know that I've ever seen him at an IHS. Must be a story there?

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