

each issue of Health & Healing features a topic that serves as a focal point for many of the articles. in july 2021, the feature topic is:

THE ART & SCIENCE OF DIAGNOSING ILLNESS

The “why” of illness is a critical piece in the health care equation. Patients may ask, “Do I have an allergy that is causing this rash?” “Why can’t I get pregnant?” “What causes a leaky gut?” Understanding and addressing the “why” of illness is a critical step on the path to health and healing—as we will explore in the July 2021 edition of this publication.

Discovering the “why” of illness—arriving at a medical diagnosis—may carry a potent message. A patient may learn that he or she is suffering from a specific disease process. Such pronouncements have the potential for enormous emotional, psychological, physical, and social impact. Thus, it is a compassionate and skillful practitioner who arrives at *the* diagnosis with the utmost care and sometimes, perhaps, even with trepidation. Labeling an illness limits choices—even as it focuses attention and resources.

How practitioners come to that point of decision has been an evolving process with a long history, and it is subject to constant testing and revision. We have science at work, offering tests numbering in the thousands to aid the diagnostic process. We can seek out abnormalities in our brains and bones, lungs, heart and circulatory system, in our blood and our hormones, in fact, in all parts of the living system.

Yet it’s true that practitioners need to know still more to guide a patient along the path of recovery toward good health. Sharing that information becomes the Medical History—the document that defines much about the patient-practitioner relationship. Every item in it—genetic predispositions, substance abuse, family history of many diseases, what you eat, where you work—has the potential to become of crucial importance in diagnosing the patient’s disease state.

Diagnosing illness is an exacting process, made even more so by the simple fact that many illnesses have multiple and overlapping causes: the “why” of illness is often obscured when the interrelationships are misunderstood and/or when the symptoms stem from simply the top layer of illness rather than deeper causes.

All of that said, while our local practitioners rely on the wonders of high technology, they also rely on the art of listening and observing, and the intuitive messages that come from both patient and practitioner. We’ll explore the diagnostic process with local practitioners in the July 2021 edition of *Health&Healing*. You are invited to be part of the conversation.