

Combat Medical Care and Holistic Medicine

By Simon Yu, MD

Our nation is at war on terrorism. If you are an American soldier in the middle of a combat zone, the last thing you need is a holistic medical doctor taking care of you. You need a highly trained combat medic and trauma surgeon to control the hemorrhage and secure your airway from the blast or ballistic injuries.

I have been a medical officer in the U.S. Army Reserve for over 20 years and currently serve as a chief medical officer with the 301st Combat Support Hospital (CSH) in St. Louis. As part of my Reserve duty, I served with the 67th CSH over two years ago in Germany. Combat medical care and holistic medicine seem mutually exclusive, on opposite ends of the spectrum of medicine, but I believe they can be closely intertwined.

Combat medical care is for acute, heroic emergency medical care to save lives from trauma. Holistic medicine is for preventive and post surgical care following acute crisis management as well as treatment of chronic illness. Successful care for soldiers can be achieved by integrating the expedient surgical intervention and holistic post surgical care which I call the Army's way of holistic medicine.

I recently came back from Ft. Sam Houston after completing training on Advanced Trauma Life Support and Combat Casualty Care. Military medical training was mentally and physically demanding under the harsh realistic combat-like conditions where the medical officers were challenged for caring for wounded soldiers under fire. I have great respect for those highly motivated young health care officers, medical doctors, dentists, nurses, physician's assistants and nurse practitioners from all three branches of the Armed Services.

Why do I mention holistic medicine in combat medical care? Because some of the most common reasons why soldiers are not "combat ready" are due to medical illness and combat stress. The Army recognizes that vector born diseases from sand fly fever, Leishmaniasis or combat stress are just as destructive and disabling of the soldier's strengths as trauma from a blast or gun shot wound. Our training not only included advanced trauma life support but also training on operational entomology, preventive medicine, combat epidemiology, high risk infectious disease in military operations, combat stress control and chaplain's services. When you add all these multi-disciplinary fields, it becomes more like the Army's way of holistic medicine.

If we can imagine the war as a symbol of disease like cancer or a heart attack disabling our body then we can make a dramatic declaration of "war on cancer" or "war on heart disease." But chaos and misunderstanding soon reign and the first casualty of "war" is the "truth." The truth is that in real life we shouldn't treat symptoms with pharmaceutical drugs or surgery when other options exist.

There are times, in real life, when "combat medical care" such as surgery, intubations, radiation and chemotherapy may be required for acute crisis management. But a far superior approach is to focus on prevention and the holistic approach to building our body's immune systems through proper diet, nutrition and detoxification.

The best preventive medicine on the battle field is fire superiority. Real life is not a combat field. And unlike the combat field where a quick fix is urgently needed, in real life, we need to explore the underlying causes of illnesses. We need to assess why someone got sick at all. For example, five of the most neglected areas of assessment by medical professionals are environmental toxicity, allergies, parasites, hidden dental problems and nutritional deficiencies. When we integrate the many disciplines

of the medical fields, we can truly restore our immune systems to handle the “enemy” whether it is a virus, parasites, heavy metals or hidden infections, and prevent the next “war”, i.e. disease.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.preventionandhealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly discussion on Alternative Medicine at Prevention and Healing on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.



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