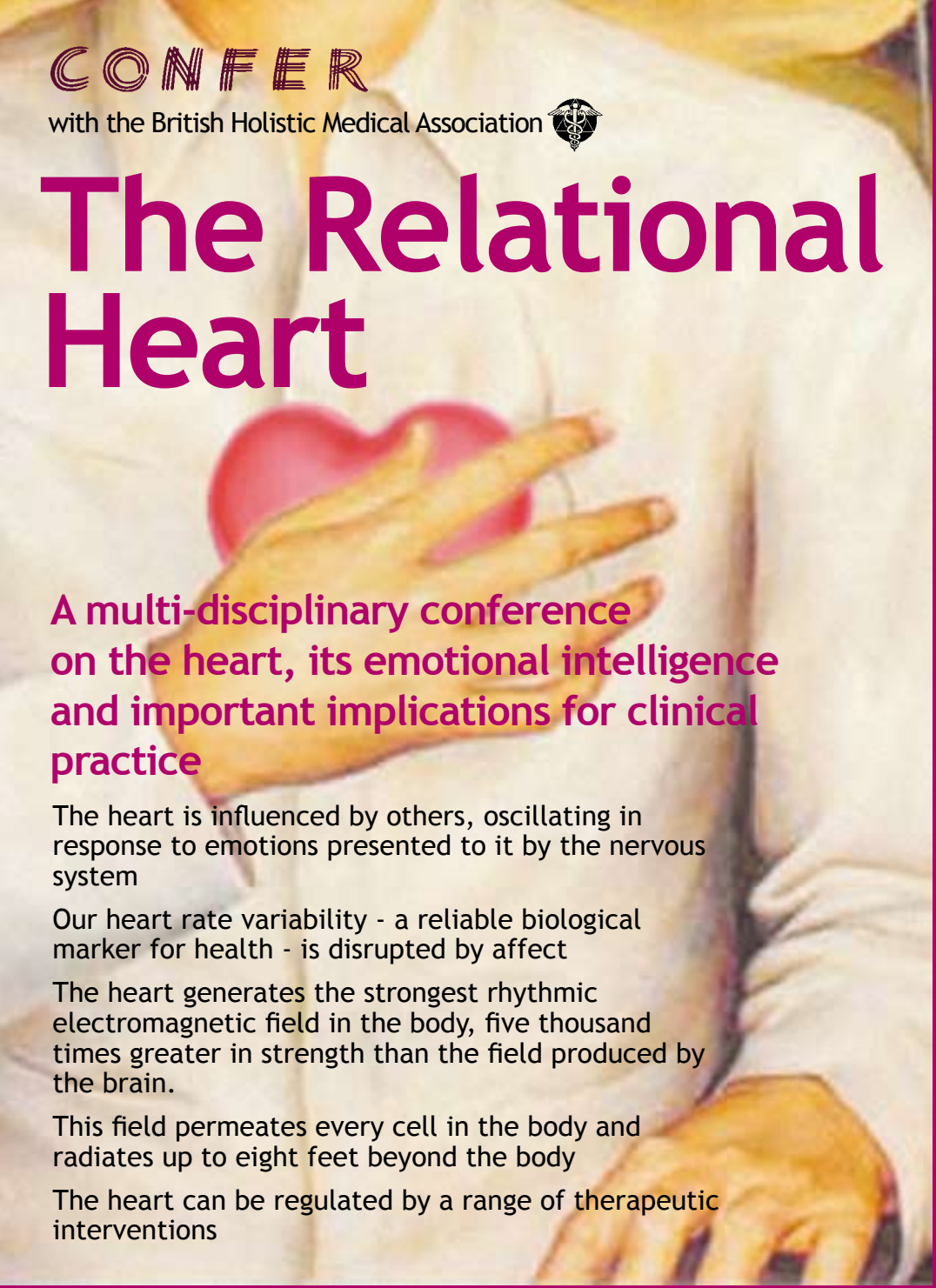
CONFER

with the British Holistic Medical Association

The Relational Heart



A multi-disciplinary conference on the heart, its emotional intelligence and important implications for clinical practice

The heart is influenced by others, oscillating in response to emotions presented to it by the nervous system

Our heart rate variability - a reliable biological marker for health - is disrupted by affect

The heart generates the strongest rhythmic electromagnetic field in the body, five thousand times greater in strength than the field produced by the brain.

This field permeates every cell in the body and radiates up to eight feet beyond the body

The heart can be regulated by a range of therapeutic interventions

Friday 25 (evening) and Saturday 26 July 2008

Introduction

It has long been intuitively believed that the heart is at the centre of our emotional lives even though within the dualistic model developed by western medicine it has been regarded primarily as a mechanical pump that is unrelated to the psychological and emotional life of the individual.

Recent neuroscientific findings now reveal how the neural networks of both heart and brain generate signals that impinge on each other's functioning. This new empirical research is providing evidence for the association between the heart and emotional intelligence via the powerful neural network comprising the cardiac neuronal hierarchy. These studies have revealed that the heart is a crucial part of a complex mind-body system that transduces intricate, dynamic responses and feedback loops between the heart and brain, involving other aspects of the nervous system as well. Research of individual heart data is also found to be a powerful indicator of the patho-physiology of negative and positive emotions and demonstrates how relationally or emotionally generated electromagnetic signals from the heart register in brain-waves. All of which has lead to talk about the 'heart-brain'.

This conference brings together physicians and therapists who want to deepen their understanding of this fascinating organ and its relevance to clinical work, whether focused on the treatment of heart disorders, affect dysregulation or trauma. We will link neuro-scientific findings to the traditional view of the heart as the seat of love and compassion, and see if between speakers and participants, we can develop a deeper understanding of how the heart and mind interact. Following a scientific grounding in the 'heart-brain' functions, we will explore a range clinical techniques for bringing the heart into our therapeutic work, including psychodynamic and body-therapy approaches.

Programme

Friday 25th July

6.0pm

Professor David Peters
Introduction to the Conference

6.15pm

Dr Alan Watkins
The importance of the heart's coherence of signal

Because the electrical activity of every muscle cell in the heart has to be co-ordinated with its neighbour (in order for the heart to contract properly) the heart generates 50 times more electrical power than the brain. In addition to the coherence required between all the individual heart muscle cells, each heart beat must be synchronised with the next beat; when a series of successive heart beats are synchronised the heart generates a coherent electrical signal. When the interval between successive beats is erratic the heart generates a chaotic electrical signal. The heart sends this "coherent" or "chaotic "signal to every cell in the body, influencing their function. We will uncover the science and consider the implications.

7.0pm

Dr John Armour

How does the heart display emotional intelligence?

The nervous system that controls the heart comprises neurons from the cerebrum to those of the heart. These neurons are in constant communication with one another in matching cardiac output to regional body blood-flow demands. These intrinsic cardiac neurons exhibit behavior that defies easy classification. In this presentation we will explore the function of different groups of neurons (such as cardiac afferent, cholinergic efferent preganglionic, cardiac motor, local circuit neurons) and how these facilitate information processing within the final co-ordinator of regional cardiac indices - the little brain in the heart.

8.0pm

Dr Stephen Porges

The Polyvagal Theory - Part I

How neural regulation of brain-face-heart connections mediate affect and social behavior

The polyvagal perspective explores new questions, paradigms, explanations, and conclusions regarding the role that autonomic function has in the regulation of affective states and social behavior. Foremost, the polyvagal perspective emphasizes the importance of phylogenetic changes in the neural structures regulating the heart and how these shifts provide insights into the adaptive function of both physiology and behavior. The theory emphasizes the phylogenetic emergence of two vagal systems: a potentially lethal ancient circuit involved in defensive strategies of immobilization (for example, fainting and dissociative states) and a newer mammalian circuit linking the heart to the face that is involved in both social engagement behaviors and in dampening reactivity of the sympathetic nervous system and the HPA-axis. This presentation will introduce this material.

9.0pm **Reception**

Saturday 26th July

8.30am

Laurie Slade

Social Dreaming Matrix (optional)

Social dreaming is a way of working with dreams where we meet to share and associate to dreams and make connections where possible.

9.30am **Registration**

10.0am

Sue Staziker

Yoga from the Heart: understanding the wisdom of the heart from an ancient perspective

The emotional, mental, spiritual and social effects of this ancient discipline are immeasurable. I will explore the heart in relation to the other major energy centres of the Chakra system and explain its importance as the energy transformer within the body. I hope to share some of the gifts Yoga has given me and enable you to experience some simple techniques to open and protect your heart on your journey as a therapist.

10.45am

Dr Fay Bound Alberti

The Emotional Heart in History

The relationship between the heart and emotions, and between the mind and the body, is a contentious one in modern medicine. In popular perception there is a 'common sense' model of emotions in which experiences like anger and fear are felt in the heart. And the heart has long functioned as a symbol of extreme emotions, particularly love, as well as of truth, of compassion, and of authenticity. Since the rise of scientific medicine in the West in the 19th century, and until very recently, the sentimentalisation of the heart as an organ has received little credibility. The brain, rather than the heart, became the organ of emotion. Only now, through the emergence of scientific explanations for the link between mind and body, heart and emotions, is the heart beginning to recapture its emotional essence. This paper traces the history of the emotional heart, exploring the language used to discuss emotions, and why it was that the brain, rather than the heart became the organ associated with emotions.It will also ask what the repercussions of that change have been for what we think - or feel - about the heart today.

11.30am

Coffee

12.0

Dr Alan Watkins

Heart rate variability and its implications

HRV has been of interest to research scientists for over 30 years and is important because it underpins health, can indicate levels of affect regulation and is easily measured to assess the function of the parasympathetic nervous system. Measurements reflect different aspects of your physiology. For example, the rapid high frequency (HF) changes in your heart rate have been shown to be correlated with your parasympathetic nervous system. In contrast, the lower frequency (LF) changes in your heart rate reflect the sympathetic nervous system or the adrenaline levels in your body. In this presentation, equipment will be used to demonstrate the sensitivity of the heart to emotive stimuli, and ways in which this can be regulated.

1.0pm Lunch

2.0pm

Dr Stephen Porges

The Polyvagal Theory – Part II: Clinical implications and insights into the role of neural regulation of the heart in mediating vulnerability, resilience, and recovery to both mental and physical health.

The Polyvagal Theory provides a new conceptualization of the autonomic nervous system that emphasizes how an understanding of neurophysiological mechanisms and phylogenetic shifts in the neural regulation of the heart leads to insights into causes and treatments of mental and physical illness. The Polyvagal Theory provides a plausible explanation of several features that are compromised during stress and observed in several psychiatric disorders. Examples of new methods of biobehavioral assessment and potential strategies for treatment of features associated with autism, auditory hypersensitivities, and trauma will be discussed.

3.0pm Tea

3.30pm

Dr Elya Steinberg

Sensitivity to the heart in the treatment of post traumatic stress disorder within a biodynamic therapy

Heart rate variability (HRV) has recently been identified as a biomarker for emotional dysfunction. It was shown that subjects with complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, in their attempt to survive in the face of environmental challenges, had lost the fine balance in and between the autonomic and motoric nervous systems. They also had an underdeveloped capacity to synchronise oscillatory communication between the sub-cortical and cortical brain, and the organisation in and between left and right brain. This imbalance shows up in loss of HRV and is also associated with increased cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. Relating to the work of Damasio, Porges, Schore and van der Kolk we will explore clinical techniques that re-establish harmonious balanced sychrohnization of the heart with other body systems and within its own neural networks via integration of unconsciously held emotional experience.

4.15pm

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick

Emotions and the heart

All emotion impacts upon the organ of the heart, but for many people this recognition is frightening and difficult. The result is often a hardening of the heart, defending against both feeling and emotion and shutting off the useful

subtleties of the heart's language. Researchers now have evidence that long term suppressed anger and the depressed response of unmourned loss does cause the heart to break.

This presentation will focus on simple practitioner tools for helping patients befriend their fear, release the emotion embedded feelings held within the heart, and restore both homeostasis and connection to the heart's natural wisdom.

5.0pm **Panel Discussion**

5.30pm **End of conference**

Speakers

Dr John Andrew Armour

Dr John Andrew Armour was, until 2007, Professor Associé, Département de Pharmacologie, Faculté de médicine, at the Université de Montréal, Canada. From 1978-2004 he was Associate Professor and then Professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia. His specialisation is in neurocardiology and he has published extensively in this field. His publications include *Neurocardiology*, (Eds. Armour, J.A., and J.L. Ardell, Oxford University Press, N.Y., 1994); *Heart, neural control* in the Encyclopedia of Neuroscience, third edition, (Eds., G. Edelman and B.H. Smith, Elsevier Science Publishers, Oxford, 2006); with Andresen, M.C. *Blood pressure, central neuronal regulation*; (in the Encyclopedia of Neuroscience, third edition 2008); *The Heart of the Matter in The Signs of Death*, (Rome, 2007); and *Autonomic Nervous System Control of: The Cardiovascular System* (New Encyclopedia of Neuroscience, Ed., G. Burnstock, Elsevier Science Publishers, Oxford, England, C.D., 2008).

Dr Fay Bound Alberti

Dr Fay Bound Alberti is Lecturer in History at the University of Lancaster, and Research Fellow at the Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London. She has researched and published widely on many aspects of the history of emotions and medicine, as well as the themes of gender and subjectivity between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. Her most recent publications include *Medicine, Emotion and Disease*, 1700-1950 (Palgrave, 2006) and *Matters of the Heart: Locating Emotions in Medical and Cultural History* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Her current research explores the history of skin disease and emotions between the 18th and 20th centuries.

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick

Elizabeth Wilde McCormick is a psychotherapist in private practice. Her background is in Social Psychiatry, Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology and Cognitive Analytic Therapy. She has worked with heart patients in both NHS and private settings since 1984 using a combination of contemplative mindfulness-based techniques as well as practical stress and effort awareness. She is the author of a number of best selling self-help books including *Change For The Better and Your Heart and You* (with Dr Leisa Freeman).

Professor David Peters

Professor David Peters trained as a medical doctor and homoeopath and later as a GP and osteopath. He directed the NHS-based complementary therapies development programme

at Marylebone Health Centre, and helped found the School of Integrated Health, University of Westminster, where he is Clinical Director. He established and led the Delivery Advisory Group of the Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health until 2006 and has co-authored or edited five books about integrated healthcare. He chairs the British Holistic Medical Association (www.bhma.org), and edits its journal, the Journal of Holistic Healthcare. His interests include the role of complementary therapies and non-pharmaceutical treatments in mainstream medicine, wellbeing – particularly in long-term conditions – and the training of integrated practitioners.

Dr Stephen Porges

Dr Stephen Porges is Director at the Center for Developmental Psychobiology, Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois at Chicago. He was formerly Chair of the Department of Human Development, University of Maryland, and Director of the Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland. He is also currently Adjunct Scientist at the Laboratory of Comparative Ethology, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Dr Porges was President (1999-2002) of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences. He has served or is serving on the Editorial Board of Infant Behavior and Development (1977-1992); Child Development Developmental Psychobiology; Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology. He is the author editor of the following books *Psychophysiology* (Editor with Coles, M.G.H. and Stroudsburg, PA, Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross 1976), *Psychophysiology: Systems, Processes & Applications* (Editor with Coles, M.G.H., Donchin, E., & Porges, S.W. New York: Guilford, 1976). He has published numerous papers the references to which can be found at www.psych.uic.edu/bbc.

Sue Staziker

Sue Staziker has been teaching yoga for 25 years. Her training has involved working with Iyengar teachers and she is registered with the British Wheel of Yoga. More recently she has become more involved with the therapeutic aspects of yoga and its healing potential. Her own training encouraged her to develop all the different aspects of yoga – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual – all of which she thinks are equally important.

Dr Elya Steinberg

Elya Steinberg MD is a biodynamic psychotherapist, integrating body-psychotherapy, Gerda Boyesen methods and bioenergy with conventional allopathic medicine, complementary medicine, healing, holistic reflexology and spirituality. She interweaves alternative and conventional approaches to allow a person to develop and grow as a holistic complex in the course of achieving physical, mental and spiritual health. She is a co-director of the London School of Biodynamic Psychotherapy (www.lsbp.org.uk) and can be contacted at elya.steinberg@virgin.net

Dr Alan Watkins

Dr Alan Watkins qualified as a physician in 1986 from the University of London, having also obtained a first class honours degree in Psychology. He has worked as a physician and academic in the USA, Australia and the UK. He also has a PhD in immunology from the University of Southampton and has published numerous scientific papers on the biological basis of performance. He published his first book *Mind Body Medicine* in 1997 and has a new book in preparation. He is currently an Honorary Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience and Psychological Medicine at Imperial College, London. He is the founder of Cardiac-Coherence, an organisation established to help people understand their individual heart patterns and to regulate these. He is also Chairman of Peach, the UK's leading provider of behavioural training to infants and children with autism.

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Alternatively you may book online at www.confer.uk.com

Special dietary requirements_____

Information

Date: Friday 25th and Saturday 26th July 2008

Venue: Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1

Registration times:
Friday: 5.30pm
Saturday: 9.30am
Social Dreaming: 8.30pm

CPD: 8 hours Certificates of attendance will be provided

Public Transport:
The nearest underground stations are Russell Square, Googe Street and Euston

Conference Fee (including VAT, vegetarian lunch and all other refreshments)

Self funded..... £130
Current members of the BHMA..... £115
Organisationally funded..... £400

To book:
Please go to our website and book online
OR detach booking form and post with payment to:
Confer, Garden Flat, 36a Mildmay Road,
London N1 4NG

Booking Conditions:
Refunds cannot be given unless you cancel your place in writing before July 11th. You may pass on your place to another person, but must given us written notice of their name 36 hours before the conference begins.

Exhibition space
You may hire an exhibition space at the conference for £200.
To do so please email info@confer.uk.com

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If you are organisationally funded and require an invoice to be raised for your place please send details to info@confer.uk.com.

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