



# Reclaiming Your Best Brain Health: Biological, Integrative, and Holistic Medicine and Their Role in Healing Your Brain and Nervous System

By Pamela J. Costello, MD PhD

I'm often asked by my patients why would a neurosurgeon be offering integrative, 'holistic' care. An integrative or holistic approach to healing involves assessing illness from its deepest causes, rather than merely looking at the symptoms. Symptoms are the body's language expressing dysfunction or imbalance. Thirst is a very clear message that our body needs water, hunger that we need to eat, fatigue that we need to rest, and pain that the body is under some form of stress.

In today's world of increasing toxicity of our air, water and food, our ecosystem has become saturated with the byproducts of industrialism, food modification, nuclear waste, etc. As part of that ecosystem, we are simultaneously becoming saturated with toxins, many of which are stored in the fat-bearing tissues of our nervous systems. Healing best occurs through addressing these underlying causes and using treatment modalities that support the body and its ability to restore balance and wellness.

After completing my medical school education, I studied neurosurgery with some of the world's greatest neurosurgeons in New York City. Additionally, I completed a post-doctoral

fellowship in a lab, studying the human Alzheimer's brain. I also studied the body's natural healing mechanisms with Dr. Thomas Rau at the *Paracelsus Institute* in Switzerland. Decades of clinical experience have demonstrated that chronic neuroinflammatory and degenerative illnesses are comprised of roughly 90% environmental toxic influences and 10% genetics, in addition to other internal environmental issues such as attitude and life focus.

The term aging is used to identify inflammatory illness that, if the causal issues are left untreated, can lead to degenerative disease, suffering, and ultimately end of life. Suppressive treatments of chronic illness may stall this aging process, but the brain and body often do not respond well to the further imbalance (that treatments working at the surface of illness can cause). We therefore need to understand the deepest sources of this inflammation and recognize that the primary contribution to aging is the ongoing exposure — over time — to toxic and other environmental stressors, via a process known as bioaccumulation. The individual can, however, identify and safely clear these toxins, thereby stimulating the body's own regulatory forces, and healing from within. True healing involves working at a root causal level and being fully responsible and willing to participate in your own healing.

An example case: Patient is a 70-year old woman who developed uncontrollable seizures 4 years prior to visiting my office for care. Multiple treatments failed, and she experienced extreme allergic reactions to numerous seizure medications. She was minimally managing her seizures with the drug Keppra, which she poorly tolerated. Her seizures and the Keppra resulted in a constant state of extreme lethargy, severe depression, and cognitive dysfunction. Her initial seizure was severe, and occurred during sleep, after a TIA event following a tick bite 2011. An EEG revealed a left temporal focus, and Brain MRI done 2011 was unremarkable. My work up of the patient additionally addressed underlying toxic and low grade infectious causes of her seizures, and treatment included gut and immune support, as well as anti-microbial and detoxification management. She responded very well, and I subsequently weaned her down to a very low dose Keppra, and her seizures largely resolved. She has full return of cognitive function, resolution of mood imbalances and good quality of life.

*As a medical doctor and a neuroscientist, also trained in Integrative Medicine, I tell my patients that they are not destined to remain in suffering, and I provide patients a safe, informed, and effective bridge to finding neurological health and wellness. For a comprehensive holistic, interactive neurological evaluation and custom designed treatment approach, please contact my office at (505) 508-6969 to schedule an appointment. [www.drpamelacostello.com](http://www.drpamelacostello.com)*

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