

changes on the basis of nutritional tests provided by commercial companies which advertise laboratory services in the pages of health magazines.

Nutritional consultations may be given by a wide range of practitioners with varying levels of training and experience, from complementary practitioners who mainly practise other disciplines through trained nutritional therapists and naturopaths to nurses and doctors who have undertaken further training in nutrition.

Nutritional medicine can be a relatively expensive form of complementary medicine. Diagnostic tests can cost from £15 to over £100 per test, nutritional supplements may cost £10-£50 a month, and dietary changes involving organic produce or wholefoods may also have substantial cost implications.

Regulation

The General Council and Register of Naturopaths registers and regulates the 180 or so naturopaths practising in the United Kingdom. Most of these are also trained osteopaths. Regulation for other nutritional practitioners is not as well established. The British Association of Nutritional Therapists registers and arranges mandatory insurance for about 200 practitioners who have completed one of the more thorough courses at selected training colleges. A few smaller registers also exist.

Training

Various courses in nutritional therapy exist, ranging from short courses of a few days leading to a certificate in basic nutrition to three year, part time courses leading to qualification as a nutritional therapist. Naturopaths in Britain usually undergo a four year, full time training which includes anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, and pathology as well as naturopathic and osteopathic principles and practice.

The British Society for Allergy, Environmental, and Nutritional Medicine is an association of doctors with a special interest in nutrition. It organises educational events and publishes the *Journal of Nutritional and Environmental Medicine*.

Correction

ABC of complementary medicine: Herbal medicine

An error occurred in this article by A Vickers and C Zollman (16 October, pp 1050-3). The caption beneath the picture of Dr Ding Hui Luo (bottom of p 1051) wrongly stated that she worked at the London Chinese Medical Centre. In fact, her clinic is Hong Ning Co, 15 Little Newport Street, London.

Regulatory bodies in nutritional medicine

General Council and Register of Naturopaths

2 Goswell Road, Street, Somerset BA16 0JG. Tel: 01458 840072.
Fax: 01458 840075. Email: admin@naturopathy.org.uk
URL: www.naturopathy.org.uk

British Association of Nutritional Therapists

BCM BANT, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 0870 606 1284

Training and educational organisations

Institute for Optimum Nutrition

Blades Court, Deodar Road, Putney, London SW15 2NU. Tel: 0181 877 9993. Fax: 0181 877 9980. Email: ion@cableinet.co.uk

British Society for Allergy, Environmental and Nutritional Medicine (BSAENM)

Membership organisation for doctors only

For publications: PO Box 28, Totton, Southampton SO40 2ZA. Tel: 01703 812124

For inquiries: PO Box 7, Knighton LD7 1WT. Tel: Premierline 0906 3020010

Further reading

- Anthony H, Birtwhistle S, Eaton K, Maberly J. *Environmental medicine in clinical practice*. Southampton: BSAENM Publications, 1997
- Brostoff J, Gamlin L. *Complete guide to food allergy and intolerance*. London: Bloomsbury, 1992
- Davies S, Stewart A. *Nutritional medicine*. London: Pan, 1987
- Murray M, Pizzorno J. *Encyclopaedia of natural medicine*. 2nd ed. London: Little, Brown, 1999

The ABC of complementary medicine is edited and written by Catherine Zollman and Andrew Vickers. Catherine Zollman is a general practitioner in Bristol, and Andrew Vickers will shortly take up a post at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York. At the time of writing, both worked for the Research Council for Complementary Medicine, London. The series will be published as a book in spring 2000.

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One hundred years ago

Honey poisoning

A case of poisoning by honey was related recently in the *Therapeutische Monatschrift* (No. 12, 1898). A woman aged 54 ate a quarter of a pound of honey, and immediately complained of a burning sensation on her forehead; this was associated with visual hallucinations. The face became pallid and cold and the pulse irregular. The patient gradually lost consciousness, and was soon attacked with general convulsions, which began in the arms. After an emetic and the hypodermic injection of stimulants she revived. Mydriasis and a pricking sensation in the tongue remained some time after the return of consciousness. The honey had a bitter taste. History relates some cases of honey poisoning. In Xenophon's time it seemed to be a fairly common event. He describes the symptoms as consisting of vomiting, diarrhoea, a staggering gait, and subsequent delirium. In 1790 in North

America Barton says it was frequently observed in Florida, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Hasemann reports 2 cases occurring in Altdorf in Switzerland. Jenner describes cases of poisoning following the administration of honey tainted with *bombus terrestris* and *bombus lucorum*. The admixture of products from poisonous plants with the honey is the usual cause of poisoning; the azalea pontica and *rhododendron ponticum* are frequent offenders. The active principle in these plants has been isolated by Plugge, who termed it andromedotoxin, on the ground that it was first discovered in the *andromeda japonica*. The cases of poisoning in America were probably due to the same alkaloid. Plugge has also found andromedotoxin in *calmia angustifolia*. In Germany the aconite plant and *nerium oleander* are generally suspected in honey poisoning. (*BMJ* 1899;ii:674)