

THE OSHER CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School | **TREATING THE WHOLE PERSON**



Greater than the sum of its parts

It's hard for us to imagine a world without today's sophisticated healthcare system. Through modern medicine, an ever-expanding suite of diagnostic tools, procedures, medications, and surgical options lay at our collective disposal. This is especially true at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) and Harvard Medical School (HMS), where some of the world's brightest medical minds continually develop better and safer treatments to benefit humankind.

But excellent care means much more than curing a specific ailment with the latest medical marvels. Excellent care seeks to understand how that ailment affects a patient's overall physical and mental well-being. Excellent care considers the interconnected systems of the body and mind. Excellent care enhances patients' health by considering *all* the tools at our disposal—those from the technologically advanced hemisphere of Western medicine, as well as from the traditionally based hemisphere of Eastern medicine.

Excellent care acknowledges the whole patient and diverse forms of treatment.

A new model of wellness

The Osher Center for Integrative Medicine's unique combination of care, research, and education is moving medicine toward a new model of wellness and healing that provides holistic care for the whole patient.

Despite the tremendous health advantages patients receive from conventional and alternative medicine, the two fields don't usually converge. Hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices typically practice conventional medicine, while alternative medicine remains less accessible to patients who seek to complement their clinical care with other means of healing.

That's why Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School established the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine in 2002. Through the center, we do the following:

- Promote holistic patient care by combining the very best treatments available
- Pursue innovative research to better understand the physical and psychological benefits of various therapies
- Educate the next generation of compassionate integrative medicine practitioners

Treating the whole patient

Clinically, the Osher Center is home to a wide variety of experts in integrative medicine who address patients' interconnected physical and psychological needs. We believe this comprehensive approach will lead to improved care and better health outcomes for our patients. Services include:

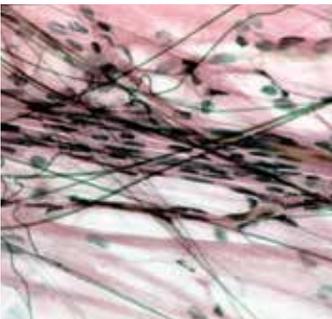
- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic services
- Behavioral health and stress management counseling
- Body and movement therapies, including therapeutic massage, postural education, yoga-based care, and craniosacral therapy
- Integrative health consultation for the management of common medical conditions
- Nutrition, lifestyle, and wellness coaching
- Group programs in mindfulness-based stress reduction, yoga, and tai chi

Applying academic rigor to integrative medicine

We ground the Osher Center's clinical work in rigorous laboratory and clinical research that aims to better understand the effects of conventional and alternative treatments on various disorders and basic functions of the body. Not only do we perform our own high-quality research studies, we are also committed to engaging in the dialogue around the latest findings in scientific literature. Through this approach, we are steering a course toward integrative medicine based on sound scientific inquiry.

Although we are not the first to pioneer the concept of integrative medicine, our commitment to research sets us apart from similar medical centers and helps us reimagine and refine the integrative medicine field. Our studies, focused on the thematic areas of musculoskeletal health, healthy aging and mind-body exercise, include:

- Exploring the potential of Tai Chi to reduce falls and prevent fractures in the elderly
- Using systems-based biology tools to characterize the loss of physiological complexity associated with aging
- Characterizing connective tissue responses to stretching and acupuncture
- Evaluating the effectiveness of integrative approaches to low back pain



UNDERSTANDING THE HEALING POWER OF STRETCHING

Helene Langevin, MD, and her team are exploring exactly how stretching during an activity like yoga causes connective tissue to relax. They found that sustained stretching actually reorganizes the internal structure of connective tissue, which in turn encourages tissue relaxation and, in some cases, pain relief. They pinpointed a specific type of cell and molecule that play a key role in this process. Their continuing work could lead to a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms as to why stretching may be beneficial.

Educating tomorrow's leaders in integrative medicine

To ensure our clinical and research efforts blossom into a new standard of care, we are training the next generation of practitioners in integrative medicine. Under the leadership of Osher Center Director Helene Langevin, MD, we are expanding our training and education efforts in integrative medicine to:

- Launch a pre-doctoral fellowship for selected graduate students whose thesis projects and research interests align with integrative medicine
- Facilitate the matching of faculty interested in integrative medicine with medical students to offer mentorship and support
- Build an integrative medicine seminar series in partnership with other HMS programs, which will be disseminated on the Osher Center website
- Organize half-day research symposia at BWH that feature student presentations and invited speakers
- Hold public lectures on integrative medicine topics
- Expand access to the Osher Integrative Medicine Clinical Conference, a weekly seminar at the Osher Clinical Center that offers HMS continuing medical education credits
- Expand the postdoctoral fellowship program to offer a range of translational clinical and laboratory research experiences rooted in integrative medicine

Transforming healthcare

Through a holistic approach to care based on multidisciplinary research and training, the Osher Center is ushering in a new health and wellness model that forges medical connections at the physiological, clinical, and community levels.

On the **physiological level**, the Osher Center is translating basic science research into patient care. Our research will help integrate the medical community's understanding of human physiology (how various body systems function) and pathology (causes and effects of disease) in order to refine our approach to holistic medicine.

On the **clinical level**, the Osher Center is looking at each patient's entire medical history, enabling us to coordinate treatment approaches. We are encouraging specialists from different areas to discuss all of our patients' medical conditions, thereby further integrating and coordinating care for the whole patient. And we are training future integrative medical practitioners to combine Eastern and Western therapies as a standard of care for their patients.

On the **community level**, the Osher Center is making plans to convene global experts in integrative medical care and research. As part of this process, we will disseminate research findings beyond our walls and help to illuminate the best practices of integrative medicine practitioners at BWH and beyond.



TAI CHI A BOOST TO CHRONIC HEART FAILURE PATIENTS

Peter Wayne, PhD and his colleagues studied the effects of a meditative exercise, tai chi, on chronic heart failure patients. Of the 100 patients who participated in their clinical trial, those who enrolled in the study's 12-week tai chi exercise program experienced increased quality of life, a heightened mood, and greater confidence in their ability to exercise compared to patients who did not. Dr. Wayne continues to examine the multifaceted benefits of tai chi across a range of health conditions.

Osher Center Leadership



Helene M. Langevin, MD, CM, was appointed Osher Center Director in November 2012. She joined BWH from the University of Vermont College of Medicine, where she served as Professor of Neurological Sciences. Dr. Langevin also holds an academic appointment in the BWH Division of Preventive Medicine. Her research focuses on the role of connective tissue in chronic musculoskeletal pain and the mechanism of acupuncture, manual, and movement-based therapies. She is the principal investigator of three studies funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) researching acupuncture, connective tissue, and low back pain. Her previous studies in humans and animal models have shown that mechanical tissue stimulation during both tissue stretch and acupuncture causes dynamic cellular responses in connective tissue. She is currently investigating how these tissue responses are affected by chronic conditions such as low back pain.



Peter Wayne, PhD, is Research Director at the Osher Center and Assistant Professor of Medicine at BWH and Harvard Medical School. His research seeks to evaluate how mind-body and related complementary and alternative medicine practices clinically impact chronic health conditions, as well as to understand the physiological and psychological mechanisms underlying observed therapeutic effects. He has served as a principal or co-investigator on more than 20 NIH-funded studies and has explored the medical benefits of tai chi and acupuncture for a variety of diseases and disorders. He currently serves as co-principal investigator of a grant to explore the Osher Center model and to evaluate the effectiveness of an integrative care team in the treatment of chronic low back pain. Dr. Wayne is actively involved in the teaching and training of students and fellows in integrative medicine research. He is author of the recently published book, *The Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi*.



Donald B. Levy, MD, is Medical Director of the Osher Clinical Center and Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. He has been active in teaching and curriculum development for many years, including teaching in Harvard Medical School's patient-doctor relationship courses; Introduction to Clinical Medicine; Teaching Residents to Teach; and workshops on evaluation and feedback. Dr. Levy is the recipient of numerous awards for excellence in teaching and has citations both for excellence in patient care and in patient satisfaction surveys. Dr. Levy's current professional interests include integrating the scientific advances in modern medicine with age-old therapies and principles of healing, the rational use of nutrition and dietary herbs and supplements, and the power of an effective patient-doctor relationship in healthcare.

Opportunity for support

The Osher Center for Integrative Medicine seeks to partner with philanthropically minded individuals and organizations who share our vision for integrative medicine, ensuring that every patient can access the very best medical options from both Eastern and Western practices.

To learn more about how you can support integrative medical care, research, and education at the Osher Center, please contact Lauren Hall, Director of Development, at **617-424-4210** or **lhall@partners.org**.