

McGill Programs in Whole Person Care



A Day at the Congress

- Tom Hutchinson

Our one day workshop on *“Healing, a Healthcare Revolution: The Challenge, the Opportunities for Caregivers”* held on September 26, 2006 at Le Palais de Congres, as part of the 16th International Congress on Care of the Terminally Ill, went very well. The message was that death anxiety is the challenge for caregivers and the opportunities arise from being fully present in the face of illness, suffering and death. The first speaker, **Michael Kearney**, gave an excellent and thoughtful overview of healing in medicine. Michael has a way of personifying the kind of healing presence he talks about. His gentle tone may have lulled the audience into a false sense of security – the calm before the storm. **Balfour Mount’s**

wonderful one and one half hour multimedia presentation on death and death anxiety, complete with historical references to catastrophic events over the past 100 years that have shaped our current attitudes to death, illustrated through photographs, audio clips, video clips and pop music left the audience breathless and stunned. They tottered off for lunch.

After lunch **Saki Santorelli** spoke on healing ourselves through mindfulness without prepared notes and without any power point or other visual aids. One member of the audience told me he was disoriented at first because he did not know what to look at until he realized there was a human being on the stage who was a suitable focus of attention.

Many of the audience commented later on the experience of renewed centeredness that resulted from this change in focus and medium of presentation -- Saki’s intention. As the last speaker I attempted, I hope successfully, to tie all of this together and point out the nature of the change we hope to see in healthcare. Healing will be a bottom up revolution that comes from practitioners learning ways to bring more of themselves to the task of caring for patients. The shift required is an individual challenge for each healthcare professional and quite distinct from the laudable call for evidence based guidelines and standardization in medicine. In addition to the presentations we had small group discussions between each talk and a question and answer session at the end. The approximately 400 hundred participants paid rapt attention, returned promptly after breaks and did not visibly dwindle as the day progressed. We have not yet seen the evaluations but, well, who knows?

After the workshop Saki Santorelli and I went to an elegant dinner for speakers hosted by Kappy Flanders at the Montefiore Club. Over drinks before dinner a colleague asked how it had gone and I told him I was completely happy. He looked at me with a worried look as if I was losing it, but I don’t think I was. It was just a great day!



Photo:
Shani Koumalanian

Michael Kearney, Tom Hutchinson & Bal Mount
at the 2006 Congress on Care of the Terminally Ill

Practicing Medicine Mindfully: Cultivating Imperturbability and Equanimity

Maureen Rappaport, MD

On December first, 2006, eighteen physicians participated in a full day workshop on “Mindfulness in Medicine”. The workshop leaders, Dr. Patricia Dobkin and Dr. Tom Hutchinson, began the workshop by expressing their gratitude to busy clinicians for clearing an entire day from their demanding schedules to attend. Doctors from five McGill teaching hospitals including members from, anesthesia, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, pediatrics, family medicine, psychiatry, and genetics represented the full spectrum of the McGill medical community.

The classical elegance of the McGill Faculty Club was a perfect setting for a day that included the Oslerian notions of imperturbability and equanimity. I expected the standard breath focused meditations and the gentle yoga stretching exercises but was pleasantly surprised when the work

of family therapist, Virginia Satir, was introduced and highlighted in a body movement exercise and role-plays. Self-awareness went beyond a purely cognitive state (a state we physicians prefer) to include awareness of body stances involved in **interpersonal** relationships. The afternoon role plays were extremely successful and resembled a Balint group, another method referred to by Epstein in his landmark 1999 JAMA essay on medical “Mindful Practice”.

The workshop added awareness of our relationships, doctor-patient and doctor-doctor (or other professionals), to the definition of mindfulness in medicine. **Self, other and context**, or the mnemonic **SOC**, was introduced to us as another clinical pearl to jot in our palm pilots and slip into white coat pockets ready to ground us in our daily rounds.

Live neither in the past nor in the future, but let each day’s work absorb your entire energies, and satisfy your widest ambition.

Sir William Osler,
to his students

MCGILL SEMINARS ON HEALING 2007

All seminars take place at 546 Pine Ave. West, from 12:30—2 pm.

Please RSVP to 398-2298 or wpc.oncology@mcgill.ca

Friday, January 26, 2007	Drs. Neil MacDonald & Martin Chasen	McGill’s Cancer Nutrition and Rehabilitation Program
Friday, February 23, 2007	Dr. David Kuhl Center for Practitioner Renewal, Dept. of Family Medicine, UBC	Physician Self-Care
Friday, March 23, 2007	Dr. Faith Wallis Department of Social Studies in Medicine, McGill University	God’s House: Religious Dimensions of Sickness and Care in the Medieval Hospital
Friday, April 27, 2007	Dr. Tom Hutchinson Programs in Whole Person Care	Longing for Virginia: Satir’s Genius for Healing
Friday, May 25, 2007	Dr. Marc Laporta Department of Psychiatry	Emotions and Empathy: Music as a Vehicle
Thursday, June 21, 2007	Craig Webb Director, The DREAMS Foundation	The Healing and Spiritual Potential of Dreams

The Breast Cancer Wellness Project:

Mid-term report

Patricia L. Dobkin, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, McGill University

The McGill Programs in Whole Person Care is providing a new clinical service for women who have recently completed medical treatment for breast cancer. The service is funded by the Jewish General Hospital Weekend to End Breast Cancer.

The Mindfulness-Based Whole Person Care Program being offered is based on the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program, developed by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1979; it was designed to teach patients how to cope effectively with various chronic medical conditions. To date, over 13,000 patients have completed the program at their centre; approximately 240 other academic medical centres, hospitals, university health services and free-standing clinics have adopted this model. It was time to bring it to the McGill community.

Dr. Patricia Dobkin, a behavioural medicine specialist and licensed clinical psychologist, is directing program administration and providing the service with her colleague, Ms. Gail McEachern, a social worker with extensive experience in family therapy. Both have been trained at the University of Massachusetts to provide the service. They are running the first group at the Hope and Cope Wellness Centre (JGH). This venue is an ideal setting as its beauty and calm atmosphere enable participants to focus on their journey towards healing and wholeness following their medical treatment. The program is designed to provide tools for living fully with the challenges inherent in recovery from a serious illness.

Women selected for the program meet within a group setting (14 participants are in the current class) for 8 consecutive weeks, for 2.5 hours per class. They are taught several forms of mindfulness meditation (formal sitting, yoga, body scan, walking); practice of these techniques is an integral part of the program both during and in between sessions. Working in a group allows participants to learn from each other as well as offer support for the meditation practice. There is a strong emphasis on self-care and taking responsibility for one's own health and quality of life.

Mindfulness meditation is a refined, systematic attention-based strategy aimed to develop both stability of mind and body and insight into an array of mental and physical conditions that inhibit an individual's capacity to respond effectively and proactively in demanding, or more commonplace everyday activities. The intervention also includes stress management, group dialogue and inquiry around the weekly home assignments. At the 6th week there is a 5 hour retreat which is an essential aspect of the intervention. There is a pre-intervention interview to ensure that the patient understands what is involved; can commit to full participation; and meets inclusion criteria. There is also a post-intervention interview to discuss with the patient how to maintain the practice and to guide the participant towards integrating what was learned into her life.

We plan to conduct a focus group with the participants in January 2007 to elucidate what aspects of the program were most helpful for them. We are also asking participants to complete questionnaires before and after the intervention in order to measure changes that occurred over time. We will present these results in 2007 and plan to run groups for other medical patients in the future, as well as for physicians, in a modified format next Spring.

Mindfulness-Based Medical Practice

An eight week program for physicians

Offered by McGill Programs in Whole Person Care

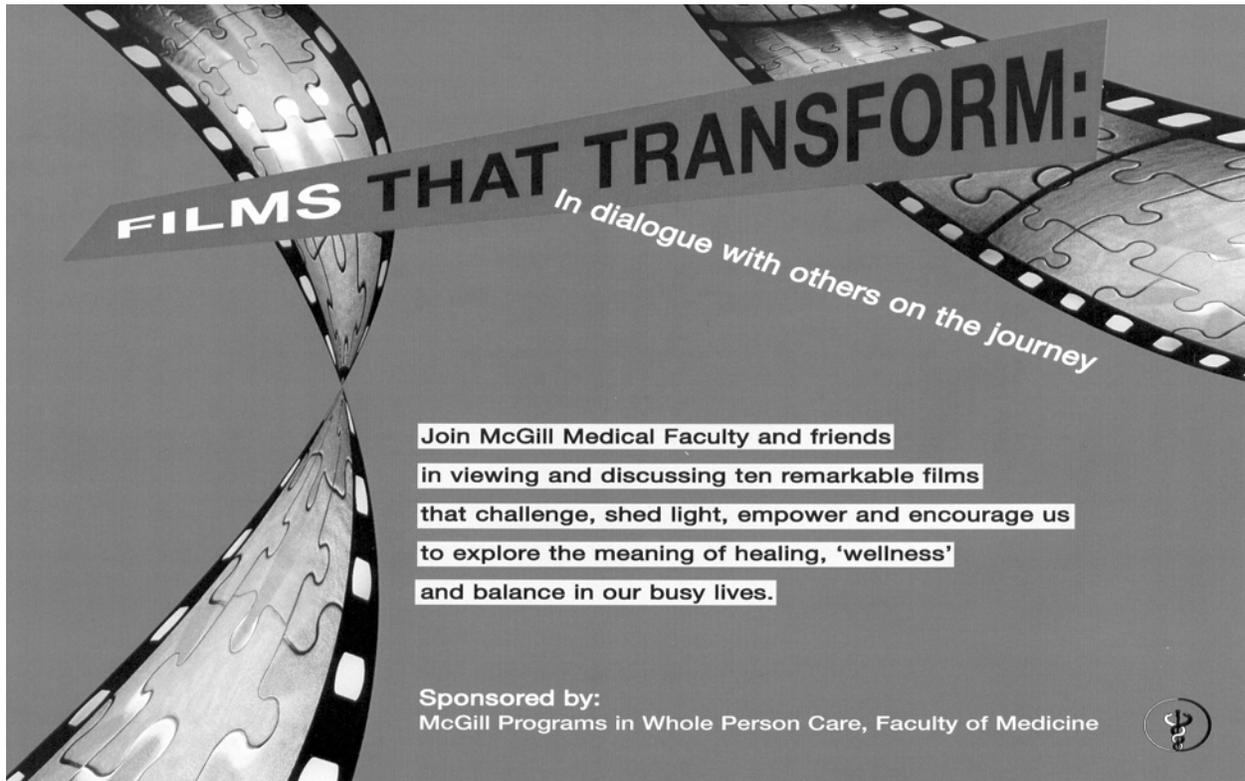
April 20 – June 8, 2007 (Fridays 2:00 pm–4:30 pm)

Cost: \$525

led by Drs. Tom Hutchinson and Patricia Dobkin

A program in Mindfulness Based Practice is designed to foster well-being in physicians. The program teaches participants to use their innate resources and abilities to respond more effectively to stress. It includes intensive training in mindfulness meditation and its integration into the challenges of daily life and medical practice.

Call 514-398-2298 or email: Eileen.lavery@mcgill.ca for registration information



Join us for these thought-provoking films, followed by stimulating discussion.

Our six remaining films for this year are:

- January 16, 2007 DOING TIME, DOING VIPASSANA
- February 13, 2007 JOSEPH GUINTA: A SILENT TRIUMPH
- March 6, 2007 THIS BEGGAR'S DESCRIPTION
- April 17, 2007 BORN INTO BROTHELS
- May 15, 2007 MURDERBALL
- June 12, 2007 39 POUNDS OF LOVE

For descriptions of the films, please consult our website:

www.mcgill.ca/wholepersoncare/filmseries

All films take place at 7 pm in Moyses Hall, McGill University (Arts Building)



Department of Oncology
Gerald Bronfman Centre
546 Pine Ave. West
Montreal, QC H2W 1S6

Phone: 514-398-2298
Fax: 514-398-5111
E-mail: wpc.oncology@mcgill.ca
www.mcgill.ca/wholepersoncare

Tax deductible donations to McGill Programs in Whole Person Care may be arranged by contacting our office.

Programs in Whole Person Care

Director: Tom A. Hutchinson, MB, FRCP(C)
Founding Director: Balfour M. Mount, MD, FRCP(S)

Faculty:

Patricia Dobkin, PhD
Steve Jordan, PhD
Antonia Arnaert, PhD
Helen McNamara, MD (Faculty Scholar)
Dawn Allen, PhD (Research Fellow)

Administrative Staff:

Eileen Lavery; Nancy Gair

Supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation and the Max Bell Foundation.