

An Open Letter to Doctors
To Learn about Functional Medicine
Carol L. Roberts, M.D.

1. Your patients are doing it - some of them have told you about it, others are afraid to, because of not knowing how you might respond.

- How do their choices of natural therapies impinge on what you are doing for them? For example, are you aware that:
- Vitamin C is crucial for combating infections and mitigating the immune response?
 - And how much is enough and how much is too much?
 - Did you know that humans, primates, guinea pigs and certain salmon species do not produce Vitamin C in their bodies and that all other animals do?
 - Oncologists advise their patients to do no Vitamin C during chemo, yet studies show that Vitamin C improves outcome of chemotherapy while simultaneously protecting normal cells.
 - Oncologists are also – tragically – taught that (as all my cancer patients have corroborated): “It doesn’t matter what you eat.” In fact, it matters a great deal.

2. You are missing out on the overarching context in which you treat patients – namely, lifestyle factors that impact their health.

- If you don’t know these important facts about a patient, you will not see the additional benefit they might get by working with a FM practitioner (could be a health coach, NP, PA or an MD or DO).
 - As an example, did you know that keeping sufficient iodine in the body will prevent and treat breast and prostate cancers, among others? Testing serum iodine levels will allow you to have that conversation with them

about thyroid function and iodine. Thyroid hormone doesn't work as well if it's made with fluorine.

3. FM itself rests in a bigger context of culture, relationships, belief systems and health habits all of which might be factors in the genesis and the resolution of illness.
 - For example, fermented foods (e.g. sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurts)- a part of the cultural heritage of many countries – are highly cancer and heart disease protective, because they provide beneficial bacteria to the gut. Our ancestors didn't know that, but we know it now, so why not encourage people with gut disorders to include a fermented food every day?
4. People want true health and deserve better than the simple “management” of chronic disease.
5. Chronic disease always has an etiology, although medical research and medical education carefully avoid teaching these root causes.
 - You might “lose a customer” if you cure someone.
 - The truth is, for every happily astonished and improved patient, seventeen others will be referred to you as the patient advertises your special skills and their friends and neighbors notice the difference in them.
6. You will experience a renewed interest in the practice of medicine.
 - If you are one of those many doctors who has been feeling “burned out” and alienated from getting satisfaction from your career, maybe it is time to open the doors to fresh ways of seeing and treating patients that will give you much more career satisfaction.
7. You yourself may have chronic health issues for which you have been told there is no cure - only drug management for the rest of your life.

- In 99% of cases, disease outcomes can be vastly mitigated, or even reversed over time, by abandoning the habitual practices that created them.
- The life of a conventional physician is not an easy one, and multiple years of high stress living can take its toll.
- There is a deliberate exclusion of supportive and restorative therapies in the traditional medical school curriculum. Instead, medical students are taught that chronic disease comes from bad luck or bad genes and that the ailment will continue to worsen forever. Symptom relief is the best one can hope for.
 - As I say to patients: “They might as well tattoo your diagnosis on your forehead”, because traditionally trained physicians don’t believe it will ever go away. And in their experience, with only the tools they gave us in medical school, they do not go away.
 - I have seen so many of these patients totally cured in months! Others recover and manage diseases like cancer and diabetes for the rest of their long lives, with non-toxic therapies.
 - You can be the N of 1 and see what it has to offer for you personally.

8. How disrespectful to our patients to not study seemingly simple treatments that have been safe and beneficial through centuries of use.

- There is a growing, but already huge, body of peer-reviewed literature on everything from nutrition to herbal medicine, to from manual therapies to psychedelic therapy and beyond.
- Don’t ever say: “There are no studies on that” if you haven’t looked outside your own silo!
- It makes you look like an idiot to people who have experienced healing in their own lives using therapies that were not taught to us in medical school.

You and your patients will never be the same.

It has been said “Once you see something in a different way, you can’t unsee it!”

Dr. Roberts encourages patients to give this article to their doctor. Her message to them couldn’t be simpler:

Humility begins at home.

You haven’t been taught crucial information.

It’s not your fault. and

It is never too late (and you are never too old!) to learn.