



# MILLHOUSE INTEGRATIVE MEDICAL CENTRE

PARTNERING IN HEALTH AND HEALING

## NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

Kia ora koutou - a warm welcome to the Millhouse community and other readers.

In the September 2023 newsletter, I expressed hope that 'cross-party' planning would be a priority for the incoming government, especially in the areas of health, education and social welfare. I am particularly interested in initiatives that improve patient care in General Practice.

The average age of GPs in New Zealand is 50 and a recent NZ College of GP ([RNZCGP survey](#)) found 75% of doctors plan to retire in the next 10 years. For decades, health planners have relied on overseas-trained doctors for the medical workforce; these currently comprise 38% of general practitioners. Increasing medical student training positions is a priority and hopefully a new university teaching school will be established, and not be another drawn-out five-year conversation. However new initiatives are not a quick fix, as it takes nearly 10 years to train a GP. In the meantime, we could encourage graduating doctors to stay in NZ by reimbursing their university fees, if they commit to remaining here for at least 5 years.

Another way forward is to increase the number of Nurse Practitioners (NP) working in primary care, and for Government to provide another 200 NP training positions [as requested by the NZ Nurses Organisation](#). Millhouse is fortunate in having Gabriella, a highly skilled NP who can assess acute and chronic medical problems. Patients can register directly with Gabriella as their preferred provider.

Health is a 'wicked problem' where many interconnected factors make it difficult to solve; it is a very challenging task to integrate delivery of equitable services, maximise efficiency by NZ's largest employer (numbering 90,000 in this complex work force) respond to acute emergencies, relieve chronic conditions, prevent disease and ensure public safety. I hope the new coalition government encourages innovative thinking and long-term planning to improve health outcome for all New Zealanders.



**COVID-19** is now in the fifth wave but is less severe than the current influenza infection. If you are older with chronic illnesses, you are at greatest risk, so remain vigilant by washing hands, and avoid highly populated risky places to reduce contact with infected people. If you develop COVID symptoms use the [SIMPLE STRATEGIES](#) I have often spoken about. A [recent controlled study](#) found those using saltwater, in either high or low concentration, as a mouthwash and nasal rinse four times daily were three times less likely to be admitted to hospital. Nasal and mouth rinsing with iodine (Betadine gargle or dilute 1 in 20 Betadine solution) and xylose (X-Clear Nasal Spray available at Millhouse Pharmacy) will also lower the viral load in the nose and throat, delaying spread to the lungs. Disturbed sleep, stress, highly processed diets, high sugar drinks, alcohol and smoking all weaken the immune response and increase the risk of illness. Use immune-boosting supplements, including vitamin D; I have written of these strategies in past newsletters available online at <https://www.millhousemedical.co.nz/resources/newsletter/archives>.

In this newsletter, I will briefly discuss the new viral swab cervical cancer prevention program that is replacing PAP smears, review the importance of mitochondria, and then discuss Vitamin B3 an important co-factor in cellular energy and prevention of disease.

### MILLHOUSE NEWS

**FOUNDATION STANDARD ACCREDITATION** was recently achieved by the Millhouse Integrative Medical Centre demonstrating it fulfills legislative and regulative standards as well as the clinical requirements needed to deliver safe and quality care. Thanks to Practice Manager Lisa and her team who have worked hard over recent months to ensure we completed this RNZCGP standard.

**CHRISTMAS - NEW YEAR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS** will soon be here, but please note that between public holidays we will only have two doctors consulting each day, with nursing and reception support. See sidebar. Millhouse's new **HEALTH COACH** can journey with you to improve your health and wellbeing. Pam offers skills and encouragement to help you adopt a healthy, less-stressful lifestyle, guide you in weight-loss, and assist improvement of your diabetes, cholesterol, and blood pressure. Pam's service is FREE, and she is available each weekday morning and all Tuesday. Ring Reception to arrange a 20-minute appointment.

**MASKS** are still to be worn at Millhouse if you have COUGH or COLD symptoms, or COVID. Wait in your car or outside the surgery and phone Reception who will invite you to enter when your doctor is free, and require you to wear a mask which are available in Reception. Mask-wearing lessens the risk of giving infection to our vulnerable patients.

**NEW PATIENTS** are still being accepted by some of our doctors.

**GABRIELLA** our **NURSE PRACTITIONER** can be seen by appointment and patients can register with her as their preferred provider.

### CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR HOURS

**December 22** - closing early at 4.00pm

**December 23-24-25-26** - closed.

**December 27-29** - open 9am to 4 pm

**January 30-31-1-2** - closed.

**January 3** - resume normal hours.

At all other times & for emergencies please contact -

**East Care A&E, 260 Botany Road**

**Phone 277 1516**

**For all Life-Threatening Situations**

**Ring 111**

**NURSE PRACTITIONERS** (NP - Matanga Tapuhi) are independent practitioners who have undergone rigorous training acquiring special skills over 4 years as they study for a Master's in Nursing university degree. Their scope of practice exceeds a registered nurse. They are able to undertake a comprehensive patient health history & examination, arrange investigative tests (blood, Xray, CT scan, Ultrasound scan), formulate diagnoses, and activate appropriate treatments which may include writing prescriptions, specialist referral and giving lifestyle advice. A NP can assess injuries, perform Driver's Licence & Insurance Medicals and issue Off-Work & Death Certificates and Work & Income forms. NZ currently has 700 NPs.



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### CERVICAL CANCER - VAGINAL SWAB PREVENTION PROGRAMME

Cervical cancer is the eighth most common female cancer in NZ, caused in almost every case by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). HPV is a family of viruses affecting 4 of 5 sexually-active males and females at some time in their lives. In most it causes only a transient infection but in women exposed to high-risk HPV subtypes, about 160 each year will develop cervical cancer, and 50 will die from the disease. HPV also causes cancer of the vulva, vagina, penis, anal canal, and the oral cavity. In my practice, HPV mouth-tonsil-throat cancer is more common than cervical cancer; in NZ about 315 cases are diagnosed each year, predominantly in older men.

Since 1990 the national screening programme has used Pap smears, named after Greek Doctor Papanikolaou who in the 1920's invented this technique to detect cancer by analysing the cervix cells. With the advent of viral DNA technology, researchers have found vaginal swabbing is more sensitive and convenient than Pap smears in identifying cancer. Any person with a cervix or vagina from age 25 to 69, who is or has been sexually-active, can have a HPV screening test, with an option of self-testing using a vaginal swab. If the HPV test result is negative, (ie HPV is not detected) the next screening test should occur in five years, or in three years for those who are immunodeficient. If the test detects HPV high-risk-subtypes, those women will be referred for specialist visual examination of the cervix.

At present General Practice is responsible for [the HPV screening](#) and our nurses will arrange a clinic visit to discuss the programme, instruct in self-testing using a vaginal viral swab during the consultation, and if time permits, include a well-woman conversation.

### MITOCHONDRIA, EXERCISE & AUTOPHAGY

In the recent newsletters I have presented the importance of mitochondria, former bacteria that eons ago emerged with larger nucleus/DNA cells, to convert food and oxygen into energy to power more than 90% of the reactions in a cell. When we are young, mitochondria are abundant and efficient but after 40 the system loses efficiency, leading to chronic disease, ageing, and cancer. The good news is that mitochondria can be rejuvenated by the magic of *intense mild to moderate exercise* and *autophagy*, the complex cell-cleansing process that removes defective/dead mitochondria (mitophagy) and recycles cell components; autophagy is triggered by fasting, restricting calories and exercise.



### PELLAGRA and VITAMIN B3 – WILLIAM KAUFMAN

In 1735, the Catalan physician Gaspal Casal described a skin affliction that affected the exposed areas of the hands, neck and feet; this became known as *Asturian Leprosy*. The same illness also created havoc in northern Italy, where Dr Francesco Frapolli of Milan named it **pellagra**, 'pelle' meaning skin and 'agra' sour. Pellagra is known for its 4D's – (sun-exposed) Dermatitis, Diarrhoea, Dementia and Death. 200 years later, Professor Conrad Elvehjem showed this condition could be cured by taking vitamin B3.

Vitamin B3 is a group of foundation molecules (niacin, nicotinamide or niacinamide & more recently recognized nicotinamide mononucleotide and nicotinamide riboside) that are essential in the formation of Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide (NAD). NAD plays a pivotal role in fueling the mitochondria electron-chain energy supply but is also an essential enzyme in DNA repair, cell communication, immune function and the synthesis or breakdown of nearly every molecule in the body. When B3 becomes deficient it affects the whole body and in particular, organs with high energy demand (Brain) and a rapid cell turnover (Gut & Skin). In the sidebar, I highlight niacinamide [usefulness in treating skin conditions](#).

Dr William Kaufman was a pioneering orthomolecular physician, skilled in correcting deficiencies and imbalances based on an individual's unique biochemistry. He meticulously recorded observations of patients using high dose niacinamide and other vitamins, and [documented his findings](#). Kaufman used large doses of niacinamide to treat osteoarthritis. In [one interview](#) he said "One of my first patients was so severely arthritic ... he could not bend his elbows enough to measure his blood pressure. I gave him niacinamide for a week in divided doses, and then he could bend his arm. I took him off it and gave him a look-alike medicine (placebo). In a week he was back where he was before; his joints were stiff again." Kaufman's observations were validated in a [small pilot trial](#) in 1996 which found that 'niacinamide improved the global impact of osteoarthritis, improved joint flexibility, reduced inflammation, and allowed for reduction in standard anti-inflammatory medications.'

Kaufman also observed that niacinamide had a calming effect, patients became less driven, had increased energy and improved wellbeing so he used it for patients who were stressed, anxious and suffering ADHD. In 1979 drug company Hoffman La-Roche published data confirming that niacinamide did indeed have a benzodiazepine/[valium-like effect on the brain](#).

Noho ora mai - stay safe this summer, unwind, make time to relax with friends & family.

Dr Richard J Coleman

references available on request

#### HPV VACCINATION

- is the primary prevention strategy to prevent both cervical and oral cancer.
- usually given before sexual activity commences but can be done later.

#### Niacinamide and the Skin

New Zealand and Australia have the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world caused by excessive levels of UV radiation. Niacinamide is sun protective, enhances DNA repair, reduces inflammation, and restores cell energy.

**University of Sydney's Dr Diona Damian** and her colleagues gave **B3/niacinamide 500mg twice daily**, or placebo to individuals who had a history of skin cancer. After 1 year they found that the B3 group had 15% fewer actinic keratoses (crusty age spots), 20% less basal cell and 30% lower squamous cell cancers.

**Niacinamide 1-5% lotion been shown to -**

- Reduce actinic aging spots.
- Reduce skin aging, wrinkling, blotching, and hyperpigmentation of the skin.
- Reducing acne and rosacea.

Note: In immune suppressed transplant patients, who have a higher risk of skin cancer, B3 had no preventative action.