

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE UPDATE

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A Series on Functional Neurology

Welcome to a new year of *Functional Medicine Update*. This issue begins a three-part series on the topic of functional neurology. In the traditional medicine quarter, the concept of functional neurology has been gaining acceptance and a positive reputation. It is now being found that approaching the neurologic system from a systems biology perspective can be applied to things as far-ranging as seizure disorders (such as epilepsy), motor neuron diseases (such as Parkinson's and ALS), cognitive dysfunction and memory deficit (Alzheimer's disease), and even cognitive behavioral disorders (ADHD, autism). New research is being conducted on the influence of both genetic factors and environmental influences in the etiology of neurological disorders.

Functional neurology has its origins in the work of such noted scientists as Linus Pauling, Abram Hoffer, and Humphry Osmond. This particular group of colleagues made discoveries linking certain nutrient deficiencies to schizophreniform disorders. This early research work produced valuable insights things such as tryptophan, serotonin, phenylalanine, and tyrosine. REF #1

Expanding areas of current research in the field of neurology include subjects such as mitochondrial bioenergetics and the role of the gut microbiome. Dr. Bland describes the current state of neurological research as an "epic period of discovery in intervention potential."

Clinician/Researcher of the Month

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Dr. David Perlmutter is a longtime colleague and friend to Dr. Bland. He was last interviewed for *Functional Medicine Update* in August 2005, and so much has transpired in the field of neurology—both in research and in clinical practice—since that time, Dr. Bland immediately identified Dr. Perlmutter as the ideal guest to begin a series focused on neurology in the 21st century.

Dr. David Perlmutter is a board-certified neurologist and fellow of the American College of Nutrition. He received his medical degree from the University of Miami School of Medicine, where he was awarded the Leonard G. Rowntree Research Award. Dr. Perlmutter is a frequent lecturer at symposia sponsored by such institutions as Columbia University, the University of Arizona, the Scripps Institute, New York University, and Harvard University. He is editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Brain and Gut*.

Dr. Perlmutter is the author of the best-selling book *Grain Brain, The Surprising Truth About Wheat, Carbs and Sugar—Your Brain’s Silent Killers*, published in 2013. The book appeared for 55 consecutive weeks on the New York Times bestseller list. It is now in its 20th US printing and is available in 26 countries. Dr. Perlmutter has a new book—*Brain Maker, The Power of Gut Microbes to Heal and Protect Your Brain for Life*—coming out in April 2015.

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