



CONVERGENCE

News, Links, and Insights
by JEFFREY BLAND, PHD



September 2019 - Mid-Month Bonus

Thank you for subscribing to Dr. Jeffrey Bland's newsletter. Enjoy and share this information, which is for educational purposes only. Always consult with a qualified healthcare professional when you are in need of medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

In this issue: The Vantage Point: The Big Bold Health Podcast; Valuable Insights From Arivale; Research to Watch: Steve Horvath, PhD

The Vantage Point: What's Been Happening in Dr. Bland's World?

Do you want to track Dr. Jeff Bland's activities, see photos from his travels, and find inspiration in his words? Follow his social media pages to stay connected!



Organic Reach: How Natural Products Became a Billion-Dollar Industry

A 3-Part Podcast Series by **Big Bold Health**

Last month, Big Bold Health began a 3-part podcast series featured a dialogue between Dr. Jeff Bland and Doug Greene, founder of New Hope Natural Media and the Natural Products Expo. All three episodes are now available as a collection, and what a worldwide response has this series prompted! If you haven't watched yet, it's time to indulge in this feel-good, learn-a-lot, be-inspired journey with Jeff and Doug. It's a masterclass in leadership and a celebration of making life an adventure.

Doug Greene was the guy who always had three jobs and an endless number of ideas. Jeff Bland seemed destined for a safe and tidy career as a university professor. What brought these two together? Their collaboration was powered by a shared interest in nutrition,



an optimistic outlook toward life and people, a willingness to take risks, and an entrepreneurial spirit that was intricately woven into the industry they helped pioneer: natural products.

Doug spent hundreds of nights on couches. Jeff racked up six million air miles. Would they do it all again? In a heartbeat! This is an origin story that is not to be missed: two men, MANY collaborators and colleagues, and a desire to bring healthy food to people all around the world. Don't you love it when nice guys finish first? Listen, subscribe, review, and share the [Big Bold Health Podcast](#). More good things to come!



Valuable Insights From Arivale

Despite notable achievements in providing precision wellness services, gathering reams of detailed -omics data that are still being analyzed, and finding ways to reduce client costs for core cutting-edge testing to a fraction of original expectations, Arivale 1.0 is no more. Much of the efficacy data from Arivale's in-depth research is still being analyzed, but initial reports should soon be forthcoming. What happened? And what are the precious lessons we can take from Arivale to lead us into the future of scientific wellness? In [this Medium article](#), Dr. Jeff Bland, who was a Pioneer 100 Project participant and Arivale client, provides an insider's view into what happened, shares the thrill of learning so much more about one's quintessential self, and describes the unexpected realizations and empowerment made possible by Arivale and P100.



Here are a few insights generously provided by Arivale:

- A smaller and more flexible pilot offering may have revealed better strategies for retaining clients
- The ability to focus on clients' immediate health concerns was hampered by not having the right to diagnose or treat disease
- Working more directly with health care practitioners to deliver diagnoses based on research findings may have resulted in better client retention
- It needed to better identify participants' motivations and to engage them on that basis while improving their understanding of the benefits of broader participation
- There was failure to clarify the advantages of evidence-based science and cutting-edge testing; as examples, in contrast to some microbiome testing services, Arivale avoided making unfounded claims about the significance of changing microbiome composition by improving diet, and Arivale provided whole-genome sequencing while most genome services sequence only around 5% (ever heard about an interesting gene variant only to find out it wasn't included in your test?)

In a similar vein, workplace programs have also provided clues about the challenge of bringing wellness into the mainstream when so many are long accustomed to popping "a pill for an ill"—very different from taking the time to understand how lifestyle is impacting one's functional health. A significant complication with employer-linked

wellness is that, because frequent job changes characterize the work climate at present, it is difficult to gather enough long-term data from enough participants with continuous, uninterrupted coverage to calculate true benefits to health and health care costs.

A recent study on [workplace wellness programs](#) concluded that it helped participants exercise more and better manage their weight, yet it was unable to detect significant clinical or cost benefits of participation over a relatively short 18 months. This could partially be explained by the need for continuous long-term participation as well as by the limitations of the research design; a study able to distinguish successful "responders" from "non-responders" might demonstrate how to extend benefits to a greater number of people. It also seems reasonable to conclude that other Arivale insights apply here: engaging individuals' personal health motivations to ensure a gratifying return on their investments of time and effort rather than hoping one fixed program will fit most. This study also brought to light the fact that participating workers are a population [strongly beset by obesity](#) (43% of participants), high cholesterol (29%), and high blood pressure (reported as 23% but may be higher with recent changes in blood pressure guidelines).

Research to Watch: Steve Horvath, PhD

Dr. Jeff Bland is always monitoring the leading edge of scientific discoveries and how they translate into clinical practice. Earlier this month, Steve Horvath, PhD, a geneticist at the University of California, Los Angeles who will be a keynote speaker at the Personalized Lifestyle Medicine Institute's Seventh Annual Thought Leaders Consortium next month, was author of a study published in *Aging Cell* that is gaining worldwide attention.

The epigenetic clock—a concept pioneered by Dr. Horvath and his colleagues—has come to be recognized as a measurement of the body's biological age. After conducting a small clinical trial using a protocol intended to regenerate the thymus, the researchers observed protective immunological changes, improved risk indices for many age-related diseases, and epigenetic aging reversal relative to chronological age. When interviewed for *Nature* magazine, Dr. Horvath said this: "I'd expected to see slowing down of the clock, but not a reversal. That felt kind of futuristic."

Read a 2014 profile of Dr. Steve Horvath, the "clock-watcher":

<https://www.nature.com/news/biomarkers-and-ageing-the-clock-watcher-1.15014>

Read "Reversal of Epigenetic Aging and Immunosenescent Trends in Humans," available free online:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/accel.13028>

Read Nature's coverage of this emerging research:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02638-w>

"THE CLOCK-WATCHER"

Steve Horvath, PhD
Human Genetics and
Biostatistics
UCLA

Keynote Speaker,
The Seventh Annual
Thought Leaders
Consortium

Just Published:
Reversal of Epigenetic Aging and Immunosenescent Trends
in Humans. *Aging Cell*. 2019 Sep 8;e13028. (Free Article)



©2019 Jeffrey Bland, PhD
All Rights Reserved

Newsletter Team

Jeffrey Bland, PhD - Publisher

Cheryl Kos, ND - Content Developer and Writer

Trish Eury - Content Editor

Annette Giarde - Subscription Manager