

EVALUATING THE THYROID GLAND “FINDING THE ROOT CAUSE”

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One of the most misdiagnosed and mistreated organs in our bodies today is the Thyroid Gland. It is estimated that 1 in 6 Americans have thyroid disease or dysfunction. In the areas of the country called the Goiterous states: (Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania) the estimates range as great as 1 in 4 Americans suffering with these problems. The diagnosis of thyroid disease or a thyroid condition(s) is so misdiagnosed and mistreated that left unattended leads to much more ominous and life threatening diseases and health challenges.

The majority of thyroid disorders can be divided into those caused by an immune attack against the thyroid by testing auto-immune antibodies and those that are not clearly immune related. Proper laboratory studies by a well- trained doctor of Integrative and Functional medicine will help find the cause(s) of the thyroid issue and address them accordingly.

The functional and integrative medicine approach to thyroid disease is distinguished by an understanding of the interrelationship between the thyroid and the rest of the body. The cause or “etiology” of most chronic conditions is multi-factorial and thyroid disease is not different. There is rarely a “single smoking gun;” more commonly there is a cache of “smoking guns.” While many physicians consider the cause of thyroid diseases to be unknown (idiopathic), this claim of ignorance ignores the thousands of studies that inform us of how the thyroid is injured by multiple genetic, lifestyle, and environmental factors.

Current studies on autoimmune thyroid disease conclude that many thyroid susceptibility genes can be divided up into two groups: those that affect the immune system and those that affect the thyroid. The new science of genome-wide association studies, despite identifying many significant gene loci (causing factors) linked to thyroid disease, surprisingly has found that each of these factors individually confer a very low risk of autoimmune thyroid disease. The evidence suggests that “genetic risk factors alone CANNOT trigger disease with other **non-genetic modifiers.**” Simply stated, it takes outside sources to activate and genetic predisposition such as toxicity issues, nutritional deficiencies, or direct exposures of environmental pollutants to “trigger” these genetic expressions.

One of the biggest modifiers that have emerged is epigenetics. “The keys to genetic-environmental interactions is epigenetic modulation (**turning genes on and off**).” Genes are not only affected by the environment, but they are turned on and off by the environment through processes such as DNA methylation, histone modification, and RNA interference by microRNA. While the intricate mechanisms of how our genes can be modified by environmental and lifestyle inputs can be difficult to understand, changing our behaviors to decrease our risk and improve our response to treatment does not have to be.

Understanding the complex physiology of the thyroid gland and thyroid system requires the training integrative/functional physician an understanding of the needs of the thyroid. Tending to ones thyroid health requires a physician who has knowledge of the dietary and nutrient requirements of the thyroid, the interactions of the thyroid to other bodily systems, and avoidance of thyroid disrupting toxic and inflammatory insults. A treating physician MUST have knowledge in all aspects of the proper diagnostic

testing procedures in order to make the correct diagnosis to therefore institute the proper treatment protocol (treatment program).

So what is one to do if they suspect OR are currently being treated with a “thyroid condition” with unsuccessful results to date? First seek out a trained physician who has the knowledge, experience and post-graduate training in Integrative/Functional medicine. You will be astounded in what can cause the health challenge you currently face dealing with thyroid disease or thyroid conditions. Next, be open minded in having much more testing to be performed both in traditional, genetic and functional medicine. Be aware that 90+% of the patients diagnosed with thyroid disease or thyroid challenges have NOT be properly and fully diagnosed properly and they (the patient) may not have what they are told (diagnosed) they have by their treating physician due to lack of knowledge and personal ideology. And lastly read! There is a wealth of information to give a health challenged patient some sort of guidance and reference to seeking out a competent, experienced health care provider who has a grasp of the importance of looking at the body as a whole and the ability to assist you the patient in proper clinical evaluations and concise treatment protocols.

If you or a loved one are experiencing poor results with your current care for your thyroid condition or any current health challenge we urge you to contact our office for a courtesy consultation. Contact Dr. Badanek at: 352-622-1151 or go to the web sites at: Dr. Badanek or www.alternativewholistichealth.com