

A Symposium on Meditation, Prayer and Spiritual Healing



Tom Janisse, MD
Editor-in-Chief

At the 2005 Kaiser Permanente National Primary Care Conference in Maui, I convened a distinguished panel, diverse in disciplines, to address the topic of meditation, prayer, and spiritual healing. The following symposium is an edited transcript of that session.

Meditation in the form of a relaxation response was first brought to conventional medicine by Herbert Benson, a Harvard cardiologist in the 1970s. *Prayer*? Isn't that something people do in church or on their knees by their bedside? *Spiritual*? Is that different from

religion? How is it experienced now? *Healing*? The only reference to healing when I went to medical school was wound healing. Can meditation, prayer, and spiritual healing be part of clinical practice? And what are the outcomes of their use?

This panel was brought together in Maui to illuminate the areas of mind, body, and spirit in clinical practice. We feel that this subject is so important that we are publishing it in this issue on health and healing. ❖

Ode to Physicians

By Tom Janisse, MD

At day's end, who do I
see in my patient's eyes
as I look in to listen?
Automated chart note?
CPT 99214?
or overbook five?

I view in her face
Mrs Yinder's twitch,
Mrs Olive's tear,
Mr Sila's droop,
Mr Garren's wink;
all visit for care.
Close air clouds our face.

A spot of blue! Ryan,
blinks then winces, clutches
his ear, his sole concern.
I too am a parent,
a child, and a patient.

Insight for me now
at another day's end:
Can that be enough to feel
therefore I am?
My schedule, my watch,
my palm pilot don't
hold my heart.

My heart holds
my head in
my hands.

What I give in visit
after visit after
visit all day long
I take home.
Ryan meets my son,
Mrs Yinder greets my
wife, Mr Sila calls
my dad across
the country.
With these people
at wit's end at home
I feel fulfilled.

Is this Tuesday?
Thursday?
It's day's end.