

NIH Surveys Healing Options

WHEN RETIRED IOWA CONGRESSMAN Berkley Bedell found himself healed—first of Lyme disease, then prostate cancer—by unconventional medical treatments, he just had to tell his friends about it. Fortunately for advocates of alternative medicine, Bedell's friends include Tom Harkin—chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. The former congressman persuaded the Iowa senator that these long-debated healing options merited serious federal inquiry. Harkin in turn persuaded his colleagues to allocate \$2 million to the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) to look into the matter, and last year the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) was born.

Already OAM has set itself apart from many past investigations of holistic medicine. "Our philosophy is to affirm rather than deny," says NIH associate director Jay Moskowitz.

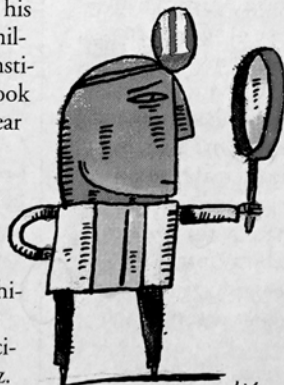
"It's not to prove that [a therapy] doesn't work, but to see if it does." That apparent open-mindedness has helped the project gain the unprecedented support of alternative practitioners and researchers, many of whom have long sought just such an impartial evaluation process by the medical establishment. "What people need is scientifically based information that they can use to make informed and intelligent choices," notes Dean Ornish, M.D., whose own work treating coronary artery disease with diet and community support was once dismissed by mainstream doctors. "I'm confident that OAM can find out what works—for whom, to what degree, and under what cir-

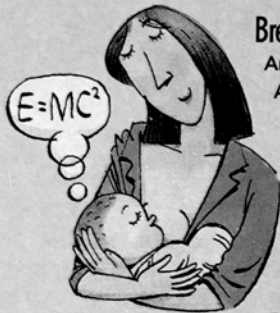
cumstances."

The office has shown its commitment to hearing all sides by calling on both alternative and mainstream healers to help choose the most promising alternative practices and to help design unbiased studies to test them. At a conference on the project last fall, Moskowitz assured the 125 healers, scientists, and advocates in attendance that the NIH would consider evaluating *any* treatment, from acupuncture and ayurvedic medicine to visualization and folk remedies. Though designing evaluations won't be easy, he admits, NIH won't be constrained by traditional methods either: "We're challenging people to come up with methods as innovative as the therapies themselves."

So far signs indicate that NIH means what it says.

Included on its ad hoc advisory panel, for example, are A. Paul Ortega, a Mescalero Apache medicine man; ayurvedic practitioner Deepak Chopra; surgeon and author Bernie Siegel; and visualization pioneer O. Carl Simonton. And the office's new director is Joseph Jacobs, M.D., a half-





Breast-fed and Brighter

Are breast-fed children smarter? After testing 926 premature babies fed through a tube (a control that eliminated the extra nurture factor of babies held to breast), British researcher Alan Lucas and colleagues suspect so. As reported in *Discover* magazine, they found that babies

who had been given breast milk developed faster than those fed formula. After testing 300 of those children eight years later—and adjusting scores for demographic factors—they found that the breast-fed group had an 8.3-point IQ advantage. Does this hold true for full-term babies as well? No one is sure.

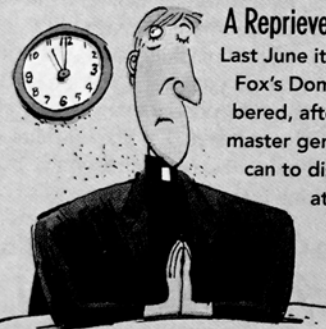
Vindicator a Big Loser

The nation's only commercial food irradiation facility lost \$923,071 on total sales of \$52,000 in its first nine months of business, according to documents signed and filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Florida company, which treats foods with gamma radiation to preserve shelf life (see *New Age Journal*, November/December '91) now has its sights on the poultry industry—but according to watchdog group Food & Water, the major poultry firms aren't interested. Says Bill Roenigk of the National Broiler Council: "We think the prudent thing is thorough cooking." Adds F & W's Michael Colby: "Vindicator clearly appears to be a sinking ship in a sea of red ink."



A Reprieve for Fox?

Last June it looked like Matthew Fox's Dominican days were numbered, after the order's outgoing master general petitioned the Vatican to dismiss the pioneer of Creation Spirituality (see *New Age Journal*, November/December '92). But there's been a heartening shift in the spiritual wind. Father Timothy



Radcliffe, the Dominicans' new master general, has been exchanging letters with the nonconforming priest—correspondence that *Creation Spirituality* magazine editor Dan Turner describes as warm, supportive, friendly, constructive—and unusual for a superior. It's not yet clear if the dismissal petition will be dropped, and Fox continues his work. Meanwhile, Rome remains mum. "It took 350 years for the Vatican to admit it was wrong about Galileo," notes Turner. "Let's hope it takes them 350 years to move on Matt's dismissal."

Mohawk, Yale-trained pediatrician with a master's in business administration who has studied alternative technologies and practiced medicine on a Navaho reservation.

Jacobs's office is now surveying NIH's 16 institutes to determine what related research is already under way, and expects to digest reports due from ten OAM task groups this March. It will soon advertise for research proposals, and by October 1 award about ten renewable one-year study grants of \$50,000 to \$100,000. Eventually, Jacobs envisions OAM as a central clearinghouse

that "mainstreams" well-documented alternative research into the established medical and scientific community.

Alternative practitioners point out that simply getting the office established—and funded—is an achievement of some note. The government "wouldn't have put \$20 into the project ten years ago," notes Siegel. Adds Beverly Rubik, director of the Center for Frontier Sciences at Temple University: "This is a major step forward. If this project is kept alive it has the potential to really make a big difference."

—Herbert P. Weiss

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NIH Grantees to Study Prayer, Yoga, and More

WHEN THE OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE (OAM) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) opened its doors in 1992, some nay sayers worried that it had come to bury alternative healing methods, not to praise them. But last September, in keeping with the office's intent to affirm, not deny, unconventional therapies, the OAM put its money where its mouth was: awarding its first round of grants—30 at \$30,000 each—

to back objective scientific studies on such diverse and daring subjects as the role of yoga in treating obsessive-compulsive disorder, acupuncture as a treatment for attention deficit disorder in children, and the role of prayer in healing.

The winners (see box at left) were picked from among the 452 formal grant applications submitted, which were broken down into eight general fields (such as ethnomedicine and mind-body) and then evaluated by panels of scientists, doctors, and alternative practitioners. Among the recipients were researchers at such mainstream institutions as The George Washington University, Dartmouth College, and the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine.

When the grants were announced, even some within the field of holistic health were surprised by the choices. Said surgeon and author Bernie Siegel (a member of the OAM's start-up advisory panel who was not involved in the grant decisions): "When I see prayers and imagery on the list, I'm very happy—I didn't think OAM would go out that far." Siegel is not the only one surprised by OAM's choices: According to Marc Stern, chief at the NIH news office, more than 90 reporters have requested a list of winning grantees. "When they read about hypnosis used to heal a bone fracture, some wonder if the agency had been taken in by frauds."

Despite such skepticism, OAM's senior policy analyst, John Spencer, believes that the awards (although modest by research grant standards) are a first step toward helping unconventional therapies be taken seriously as research subjects. "Many of the studies that received OAM grants will be able to collect pilot data to move on to compete for larger grants from conventional funding sources," he says.

And Siegel notes that when objective, scientific studies of alternative methods begin to circulate in professional jour-

NIH Grants: Money for Mavericks

The NIH's Office of Alternative Medicine (see article above) has awarded grants of \$30,000 each to researchers at the following institutions:

MODALITY/ILLNESS	INSTITUTION	STATE
Acupuncture/Unipolar depression	University of Arizona	AZ
Massage therapy/HIV-1	Morse Physical Health Research Center	OH
Electrochemical treatment/Tumors	City of Hope National Medical Center	CA
Hypnosis/Chronic pain	Virginia Polytechnic Inst. & State Univ.	VA
Massage therapy/Postsurgical outcomes	University of Virginia	VA
Music therapy/Brain injury	Pennsylvania State Univ. Col. of Medicine	PA
Energetic therapy/Basal cell carcinoma	Menninger Clinic	KS
Hypnosis/Healing of bone fractures	McLean Hospital	MA
Homeopathy/Health	University of California, Los Angeles	CA
Dance & movement therapy/Cystic fibrosis	Hahnemann University	PA
Tai chi/Balance disorders	Northwestern University	IL
Guided imagery/Asthma	Lenox Hill Hospital	NY
Hypnotic guided imagery/Immune response to breast cancer	Good Samaritan Hosp. & Med. Center	OR
Imagery/Imm. response to cancer & AIDS	George Washington University	DC
Imagery & support groups/Breast cancer	Univ. of Texas Health Science Center	TX
Chiropractic/Spinal health	University of Vermont	VT
Macrobiotic diet/Cancer	University of Minnesota	MN
Ayurvedic drug/Parkinson's disease	Southern Ill. Univ. School of Medicine	IL
Biofeedback/Diabetes	Medical College of Ohio	OH
Therapeutic Touch/Imm. resp. during stress	Medical University of South Carolina	SC
Antioxidants/Cancer	Univ. of Colorado Health Sciences Center	CO
Massage/Devel. of HIV-exposed babies	University of Miami	FL
Yoga/Heroin addiction	North Charles Mtl. Hlth. Res. and Trng. Fdn.	MA
Yoga/Obsessive-compulsive disorder	Khalsa Foundation for Medical Science	CA
Biofeedback/Pain	Fitzsimons Army Medical Center	CO
Ayurvedic/Health	Sharp HealthCare	CA
Acupuncture/Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	Virginia Commonwealth University	VA
Massage/Bone marrow transplants	Dartmouth College	NH
Intercalary prayer/Addiction	University of New Mexico	NM
Qi gong/Reflex sympathetic dystrophy	University of Med. & Dent. of NJ	NJ

CHART SOURCE: NIH Office of Alternative Medicine

nals, doctors may finally begin to accept these methods. "Just like they might write a prescription for a medication," he says, "they'll prescribe massage or imagery."

—Herbert P. Weiss

A W A R D S

Celebrating Women's Work

Might things be different if women ran the world? On December 9, the 1993 Right Livelihood Awards were presented in Stockholm, Sweden, spotlighting the efforts of women activists from around the globe who have made outstanding positive

contributions in situations of crisis or conflict. This year's recipients of the award—often referred to as the alternative Nobel Prize—will split prize money of \$200,000. And the winners are:

■ **Mary and Carrie Dann** of the Western Shoshone Nation, for "their courage and perseverance in asserting the rights of

indigenous peoples to their land." For more than 20 years, the Dann sisters have been waging a battle with the US government through litigation and civil disobedience to help protect their ancestral lands (including two thirds of the state of Nevada and small portions of California, Idaho, and Utah) from the destructive effects of mining and nuclear testing.

■ **Arna Mer-Khamis** (Israel) and the organization **Care and Learning**, which she founded in Jenin (occupied West Bank), for her "passionate commitment to the defense and education of the children of Palestine victimized by military occupation." Her organization has intervened on behalf of

Palestinian children held in overcrowded unsanitary prisons and created innovative learning programs for children whose regular education had been severely disrupted by the conflict.



■ **Vandana Shiva** (India), environmental activist, advocate, and researcher, for her "pioneering insights into the social and environmental costs of the dominant development process, and her ability to work with and for local people and communities in the

articulation and implementation of alternatives." Shiva has been involved in the initiation of a national campaign in India to save indigenous seeds and resist bioengineering as well as a campaign to expose the environmental damage caused by internationally financed eucalyptus plantations.

■ **The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP)** in Zimbabwe, cofounded by **Sithembiso Nyoni** in 1981 following Zimbabwe's independence war, for "motivating its million members to choose their own development path according to their culture and traditions, and for its effective response to the most lengthy drought in southern Africa." Among the ORAP's efforts to help the country develop sustainably are locally designed programs for libraries and preschools, irrigation and agro-forestry projects, appropriate technologies development, and a traditional medicines' program—which seeks to revive the knowledge of healing herbs available locally.



—J. K.

