

Relationships in Parasitology and Bacteriology; So What Is It All About?

Dr. Omar M Amin*

Institute of Parasitic of Diseases, Parasitology Center (Inc.), and PCI Wellness, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Omar M Amin, Institute of Parasitic of Diseases, Parasitology Center (Inc.), and PCI Wellness, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA.

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Abstract

This is a personal perspective on the relationship between parasites and hosts seen in a gestalt perspective. A parasite is not a constant being but a continuously changing entity that never produces the same pathology or symptomology in the changing biological and psychological environment of the ever changing host. It is all about relationships.

Keywords: *Gestalt; Parasites, Bacteria, Relationships*

Introduction

The subject matter of this treatment is introduced in a philosophical context for the first time. Preoccupation with traditional parasitological topics like morphology, classical taxonomy, physiology, treatment, development, life cycles and molecular studies only distract from the larger picture envisioned by the earlier renaissance teachers when science was only a branch of philosophy. This brief introduction is an attempt to view the science of parasitology in its innate philosophical framework and not to be confused by details and particulars; a revival of Gestalt.

Materials and Methods

This presentation is thematic in nature and does not lend itself to the traditional methods of running parasitological research. The only necessary tools in use are an open mind to relook at the same phenomenon with new eyes to discover new perspectives that have always been there. We miss this dimension of science because we insist on seeing with our eyes. The mind and its methods corrupt because they interfere with observing with the eyes closed. Therefore, the best materials and methods in the present context are no materials and methods. They are in the realm of the contemplative thoughts and energies rather than material objects and procedures. The Tao that can be told is not the true Tao [8].

Results and Discussion

Relationships in parasitology and Gestalt

My personal perspectives about Parasitology are not much different than my perspectives on jogging, swimming, painting, playing music, and writing. It is always a journey that brings meditative inner consciousness together with correct action. Recognizing the temporal and spatial relationships between parasitic infections and physical and psychological trauma is parasitology viewed through a gestalt perspective. Those relationships may, in many cases, be operative at the sub-clinical level since early childhood years. Progressive or sudden overt disease may occur later on in life. The reactivation of infection is usually associated with depressed immune status. Age, hormonal changes, and physical or psychological stresses are important contributors to immune system suppression. Compromised immunity in adults renders the body wide open for many opportunistic infections that may become established in the adult stage and

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not only during earlier years of life. Inter-relationships of this nature have not been the usual preoccupation of the traditional scientific or academic community. Rare exceptions, however, exist: The impact of major parasitic diseases on the immune system, as well as the subsequent effects of the latter on other parasitic infections, have been recently considered by Kirszenbaum [6]. Short term studies on the direct impact of acute parasitic infections on human or animal health are, however, more frequently reported in the literature. In addition, the inter-relationship between host immune system and concurrent parasitic infections needs to be more seriously considered. For instance, suppressed cell mediated immunity in patients with invasive amebiasis makes it possible for the opportunistic *Candida albicans* to develop frequently in those patients.

Holistic parasitology

My particular interest in “holistic parasitology” is one facet of my overall philosophy on RELATIONSHIPS which has its roots in Zen Buddhism. We have come, of late, to recognize that it is not the nature of the beast that matters but rather how that beast interacts with other beasts. Observe for instance the working relationships in quantum mechanics. Einstein recognized the nature of atomic behavior and relationships as did Heisenberg [5] in his initial work on the Principle of Uncertainty. See Fritjof Capra for interesting perspectives on these concepts. Capra [3] also coined this paradigm shift in physics in his eloquent expose of the relationship between physics and Taoism. Paradigm shifts have also been recently recognized in such fields as psychiatry, physics, religion, diplomacy, psychiatry, philosophy, and health care. Few in the clinical field recognize that a malfunctioning organ does not exist in a void but also interacts with the total physical, mental, emotional and intuitive entities of the patient. While parasites can adversely impact host’s immunity, a compromised immune system often issues an open invitation for increased parasitic invasion and invasiveness. In my practice in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area, those relationships, e.g. between chronic fatigue and parasitic infection, were clearly evident. In immune compromised patients, certain intestinal parasites, ex., *Blastocystis hominis*, were observed to be associated with marked gastro-enteric symptoms. Immune competent patients may not experience such pathologies.

Health is an expression of balance between one’s physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual entities; see Ouspensky [7]. When that balance is disturbed by pressures, e.g. acute or chronic parasitic infections and/or non-physical factors, it needs to be restored. Homeopathic physicians understand these relationships. They also respect parasites. I now realize why I developed such an appreciation for this community of practitioners. To me, it is the 21st century expression of what I always related to intuitively, i.e. the native doctor of the tribal culture in Central Africa that understood and dealt with the body and soul, of his patient, as one. I have been trained to research and publish in hard core scientific journals with readership not extending beyond the specialized professionals. One of the major features of the new paradigm shift in the sciences is the enlargement of the scope of coverage and treatment to address the non-specialized professionals and the public. See for example popular works by Steven Hawking [4].

Certain relationships in the parasitological field need to be more fully explored, e.g. those between parasitic infections and host physical-mental-emotional states as well as environmental variables. The latter include direct or indirect animate (human, wildlife, or domestic animals) and inanimate sources. Here, one should stress again the fact that behavior of the same parasite species will not be the same depending on host innate and external variables.

About relationship between bacterial pathogens, parasites, and symptoms

In observations of many PCI (Parasitology Center, Inc.) patients over the years, we noted that many experienced GI symptoms but no parasites were detected from fecal samples provided. These cases were explained as possibly relating to “other pathogenic organisms, e.g. pathogenic bacteria, that can cause symptoms comparable to those produced by typical parasites”. In our cross-sectional study of 5,792 fecal specimens from 2,896 patients in 48 states and the District of Columbia, 32% were found positive for protozoan and helminth parasites during the year 2000; see Amin [1]. This prevalence rate was consistent in a number of subsequent PCI studies. The most common parasites, in order of prevalence, were *Blastocystis hominis*, *Cryptosporidium parvum*, and *Entamoeba* spp. A sizable proportion of patients without infections, nevertheless, exhibited GI symptoms, including but not limited to diarrhea, constipation, and abdominal cramps, similar to those observed in patients infected with parasites. Those patients were unaccounted for in terms of causation. We

later verified the original assumption of involvement of other infections, documented the identity of bacterial agents involved in the GI symptomatology in patients proven to have had no intestinal parasites, and provided the results of sensitivity and resistance tests for treatment purposes. The GI symptoms in those parasite-free patients can now be explained by the pathogenic bacteria documented for each case, including but not limited to, *E. coli*, *Klebsiella* spp., *Proteus* spp., *Enterobacter* spp., *Serratia* spp., *Citrobacter* spp., and *H. pylori*, among others [2]. Other studies show that IBS associated with abdominal pain, bloating, and diarrhea is caused by pathogenic intestinal bacteria. Associated skin manifestations may show infections with various species of *Staphylococcus*, among other cutaneous bacterial infections. They may also be related to allergic host reaction to the metabolic byproducts of the living parasites/pathogens; another relationship. None of the component parts of this relationship acts in a void but are invariably interconnected.

Conclusions

This presentation is an attempt to invite scientists as a whole, not just parasitologists, to connect with the philosophical essence of their work and not be satisfied with its external texture. It is the eternal duality between essence and personality. We can still do what we like to do, but still interact with it in its deeper dimension, and ours. Never confuse the ocean with its surface but know the ocean for its depth and teaming life forms at its floor. If I have done nothing else but make you relook with a fresh eyes, then I succeeded.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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