Summit Introduction and Guest Welcome

Hello and welcome to the Reversing Alzheimer's Summit. I'm one of your host, James Maskell, and I'm super excited to welcome someone who's on the cutting edge of the conversation about Alzheimer's that causes some of the new, innovative tools and really creating the kind of transformation that we'd love to see here.

So a warm welcome to Doctor Cheng Ruan. He is the founder of Texas Sense of a Lifestyle medicine. He's also doing incredible things in the Houston area to bring new understanding to the understanding of the interplay of energy, medicine and functional integrative medicine, as well as some awesome leading edge technology.

So we're grateful to have you here, doc. Okay, thanks a lot. Thanks for having me. Appreciate it. There's a few things that I want to make sure that everyone who listens to our summit knows that.

I think you have sort of unique access to. And I guess one of the first things I wanted to check in on is, you know, when we had conversations about this before, I think you're aware through your care and the work you're doing, some of the the causes of Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline that you may not hear about, you know, out the world.

And this is through, obviously, seeing a lot of cases and working with it. So what are some of the unlikely causes that you've seen that maybe aren't on people's radars?

Yeah. So just off the top of my head, like some of the biggest misses by far are infections that are really, really close to the brain. So this could be chronic sinus infections that people thought were just allergies.

Hidden Causes of Cognitive Decline

This could be mass dental infections, periodontal infections and stuff like that. So the reason is because, we know that specific organisms, at the end of the day, it shares, different systems such as detox systems with our brain.

And that is anything that's connecting the brain down to our thorax or chest right here physically can cause any restrictions and decrease either blood flow, lymphatic flow or lymphatic flow, which basically the immune system of the brain itself, if anything so becomes a problem plumbing problem.

So anything decreases that work on stop that becomes an issue such as soon as infections, dental functions and stuff like that. So we already know, for example, that heating develops and other different types of organisms that we've found in teas and other organisms that are sinuses end up being in these plaques that we find in people with Alzheimer's disease, which are amyloid plaques and tau protein and stuff like that.

So at the end of the day, like your dental hygiene, your sinus hygiene is extraordinarily important to prevent the progression of disease. But at the same time, that infection itself could be the one that's causing memory issues.

So in my practice, we use EEGs, which are basically electrodes that we have on the brain to look at the patterns that are there. And we're able to tease out some patterns on the EEG that's correlating with these infections, causing a lot of sleep disruptions and stuff like that.

So that's number one infections near the brain. Number two, anything that causes a decrease of dumping of lymphatics from the head down. So it could be something as simple as posture.

So I mean postures were much this way. Your head's very much this way. It actually impedes the flow of the lymphatics coming down from the head down. Right. Yeah.

And of course, some people have dental issues where their bite is a bit crooked and that causes a lot of head and neck strain. Right? It causes posture issues.

That is actually one of the hallmarks of chronic, brain atrophy, which is basically brain shrinkage. Another part is what we call tech neck. And these days everyone's on their phones looking this direction.

So the photo calls the forward head posture as the head is coming more forward. We're seeing that becomes issues. And once again that has to do. It's a bit of a plumbing problem, not just a plumbing problem.

It's a bit of a plumbing problem where the lymphatics within the head and neck has to be drained downwards in order for detoxification to occur. So that's a big one.

Posture is huge when it comes to kinds of issues, right. And the third one that's most commonly missed is a bit of a combination between the first one.

The second one, which is environmental toxins. So that the broadest in part was the inhalation Alzheimer's, talking about environmental toxins causing issues with brain development and ultimately brain shrinkage we call atrophy, which correlates with memory loss.

But a lot of the ways that we deal with environmental toxins are trying to improve the flow of the lymphatics from the brainstem downwards. Right. And so this could be mold exposure or water damage.

Home. This could be a freshly. We had a patient with a freshly painted kitchen and started having some severe memory issues shortly after that, because there's a lot of volatile organic chemicals that are basically going into the air from the kitchen and stuff like that, right?

Or it could be as simple as chronic allergies. So we have a patient who basically has a lot of allergies to horses. He ended up moving from Kansas down to Texas on a horse ranch with his daughter and developed major cognitive issues.

But when he's away from that, he's actually a lot more awake and talkative. So even the chronic allergies, if if prolonged enough, we can consider those environmental toxins as well.

So having your best friends with your allergist or M. D. doctor and stuff like that is not a bad idea. And we want to get to the root of memory loss as soon as possible.

But those are the top three I think people are missing the most. Yeah, I think those are great. And I could see how those could actually like interact with each other.

So like, I know for my father, one of the things that was with him, obviously there was a mold thing. So that was key. But then I think it was getting him all junked up and sinus and that was there.

It's interesting you said like proximity to the brain. Yes.

How Sinus, Dental, and Airway Issues Affect the Brain

By what you're saying is like the brain is in sort of like a flow system of, of to in and moving things out. And when things get stuck, it's more likely to go sideways.

Absolutely. So let's imagine that our skull is a series of caves. And these caves are called sinuses. All right. So the sinuses have a very interesting job.

And so our whole body, 85% of a type of nitrogen gas called nitric oxide is created or manifested will be in the actual sinuses, air moving into the sinuses.

And so nitric oxide depletion can cause memory issues shrinkage, ADHD, depression anxiety, etc., etc.. Right. So what happens is that's air moving in these caves.

So in the sinuses the sinuses have a cover on it called the mucosa. And then below the cover you have the sub mucosa. So there's a lot of nerve endings that actually goes into the sinuses similar to the teeth as well.

So these are branches of what's called a traditional nerve. And traditional nerve is kind of like my hand on the side of my face. There's different branches that branch out right here.

Okay. And so there's specific branches that go into the sinuses and go into the front for teeth right here. The maxilla part of the mandible. And there's sensory nerves.

So there's sensing that something is wrong. So if you have mold that's in something is wrong. So what it does is goes back into this part of the brain called the hypothalamus.

And it shuts off the regulation of another nerve called a vagus nerve. So the vagus nerve is the nerves. It calms you down. And we're designed to do this because this is how we sense danger.

So if you have chronic sinus issues, dental infections, your brain's dangerous signals always on. What that does is that because the vagus nerve gets kind of cut off, a lot of things happen to the body.

Heart rate becomes dysregulated, blood pressure becomes dysregulated with the term we call it this autonomia. Your gut microbiome changes rapidly. Just like that.

You're not able to get into deep sleep very much. So a lot of sinus obstruction or even dental infections causes really improper sleep. And we know that proper sleep is required for the brain to really seal itself.

Right at the end of the day, all clinicians know, like if you go back to sleep, have body and so if there's any sinus issues in these caves, they're kind of gummed up with mucus.

And it's not making this nitric oxide and the nerves going back to the brain and saying, hey, hey, something's wrong. Danger mode. We kind of have to listen to it.

The question is, how do you know it's doing that? Well, a lot of times we look at somebody and they have these dark circles in the eye called allergic shiners.

Maybe it's a little baggy, right? And then a lot of times their eyes look sunken in and they have TMJ issues because their body is telling the the muscles of the jaw that clench to open up these airways.

Right. And as you're clenching and as you're trying to open up these airways, if it's not, if it's not enough, then you can get like a lot of TMJ problems clenching, grinding.

Your dentist can even say where marks on the teeth. Those are huge issues to be taken care of immediately. Some people have obstructive sleep apnea where the airway gets obstructive and that causes airflow velocity issues.

So sleep apnea is a huge portion of the population that have a lot of these memory issues, right? So these are the these are like physical things that we have to make sure that we treat right away before things, you know, get worse.

I mean, the whole summit is called reversing Alzheimer's. What part of the reversibility is making sure that you're actually getting air to your brain?

Your body's getting the the the signals for the vagus nerve to actually work so the organs can work, the gut can work, and then everything becomes a happy marriage.

It's awesome. Well, you got so much great, great info. And I know that you see a high volume of patients and super big fan of everything you're doing that Texas Center for Lifestyle Medicine.

If you're in Houston, you're in for a treat. And if you're inside Texas, I know that you, you know, deal with so many patients there. And I highly recommend that, I really want to touch into some of the cool solutions because you, always on the cutting edge and, you know, we haven't really had anything on this summit about anything related to, like, energy medicine.

Obviously, you guys see things like vagus nerve interaction is kind of energy medicine in a certain way. But yeah, share with us a little bit about some of the the things that you're excited about. And on the cutting edge.

Absolutely. So recently we added a new department to the program that's run by neurologists called synaptic. Synaptic is a branch is a neurology division at Texas Center for some medicine, where we serve the population that's in assisted living and memory care facilities.

And so what we're doing for them is we're providing the latest technologies and data to research on what actually moves the needle and improving the quality of life and improving cognition.

So my favorite thing really in the last two years is looking at frequency based therapeutics. So a couple of years ago there's ultrasonic frequency therapies are approved for Parkinson's and now they're approved for Alzheimer's disease.

Right. And these are done in some of the educational institutions. Now, this, lot is widely, widely, there. But what we do know is that whenever you're looking at frequency based therapeutics, anything around the 40Hz, which is a sound frequency, is able to not only improve cognition, we're also improve the folding of these proteins, amyloid plaque that we actually see right now.

Frequency. Frequency ultrasonic frequency therapy has been used for a whole lot of things. Even some NGS is used to break up mucus in the sinuses. Right.

Frequency-Based and Non-Pharmacologic Therapies

It's perhaps there's a mucus busting effect, and perhaps there is a vibrational effect where it's allowing this cerebrospinal fluid, which is the fluid, the base of the brain, to move a lot more readily, and therefore you're dumping a lot of toxins in.

But we're seeing that this energy based or frequency based medicine is coming into fruition quite a bit. There's something new, and maybe by the time it's some it's actually released.

So the FDA approved, it's actually a specific set of devices. But our focus on accommodative sound is emitted near infrared. So near infrared, you kind of see these gadgets all over the internet right now.

One of them is called a mehndi. When the 250. Do all devices use the infrared to improve the blood flow? It's the frontal lobe. Like it's developed by NASA and another Swedish company.

So we're seeing all these self-help improvement devices that's on the market right now. And actually, a lot of it is, is really improving cognitive function.

But some of it is going through FDA trials right now with specific medical devices that are coming out. So I think 2025 is a really exciting year for cognitive decline and Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

So what we are doing is whatever is coming out, we want to be able to to have it and provide non pharmacol therapeutics or frequency based training for the people with cognitive issues.

So on the synaptic, our programs and a tick the synaptic program we have is designed to do this. Let's get people

with cognitive issues at certain facilities to access this, and then work with them over time to see improvements.

But we're also doing as I we're doing group visits with them as well. So we're doing group visits with them on a sound frequency training. So some people call a sound healing, right?

We have tai chi qigong, and we know Taiji and qigong breathwork modalities actually can significant impact the kinds of decline not only just decrease the progression, but dramatically reduce the mental health issues that are surrounding, kinds of issues right now.

Yeah, it's these programs are are something that we've done for a number of years. We just put them into the assisted living in memory care facility. But the outcomes are actually really good.

And, my hope is to get more group programs in the, in the US, North America covered by insurance so that we're able to continue on with this. That's super cool.

So how do you expect that to happen? You expect like, you know, like assisted living to get the machines and you do it. You know, you can do it there.

Or does it have to be done by a doctor. No. It's got to be done by, by by clinicians. So these little facilities just provide a space and we provide basically everything else.

And so what happens then is that assisted living and independent living in memory care already have programs such as this. O'Reilly is a direct focus specifically for cognitive decline or dementia and stuff like that. Like ours is. Right.

And so, for example, we just did, a patient I was looking at their mapping data. We can say, hey, we increase your blood flow to the frontal lobe. This percentage compared to the last time that we did it, which is a week ago.

And this is where we think the progression is going. I think that's really the new age of improving cognitive function for the folks that are listening at home.

I think this is a good opportunity to understand that a lot of the new technology that's coming out that is based on, these meditation machines, different headbands and stuff like that, there's a lot of science that's actually behind that.

And because these things are getting more expensive in the consumer market, they're still great to do. But we're seeing this new giant shift towards some of these FDA approved products on, on the back end being developed.

And I think it's going to it's going to be really, really good because the initial data is good and these are some medical devices that are coming out.

So I'm really, really hopeful. That's really cool. You know, you mentioned tai chi and qigong. You know I love to see the average assisted living or memory care play.

So senior living like with 50 people out on the on the grass doing it together like you'd see in China. What what do you think the chances are. But like a cultural shift of that size and scale?

Yeah, James, we already did it. Two weeks ago was our first day. We had our initial few people sign up in these, I said both from my memory care facilities.

And then we have, we have a breathwork entitled Qigong Master on on staff was actually a certified health coach himself, and it's a health coaches led group systems and group therapies.

And so, it's something I've dreamed about for such a long time. And I think two weeks ago it finally happened. It was really fun to kind of get the feedback from people and, and the family members as well, anything to reduce the

loneliness and isolation and give the sense of dignity and also get the sense of just feeling significant on a day to day basis for them is already like quite difficult.

But when you provide something like that in a group community, it's it's it's really fun to watch. Yeah. Tell me a little bit more. I mean, obviously this is an area where we've had a lot of agreement and, you know, innovation together.

Like, it seems to me that like the the community and having the right community around you is the one thing that you can do to, you know, to reverse. Because ultimately, even through this whole summit, it's like the heart of the thing to do is the more likely that you'll do it consistently if you have some sort of support, right?

Yeah. I think is, is this is we see that people heal much better in groups than one on one visits with the doctor, or even with the health coach, actually, or dietitian.

And it has to do with this mentality of I am not here alone. And because you can interact with other people, not only is the compliance higher, which I don't like to use the word compliance.

So let's let's just call it excitement. That only is the excitement for this. For this much better. You're using the community as a as a source for healing.

And we see over and over again a multiple longitudinal data, especially the VA data, seeing that community based or group based therapies is good for pretty much all the chronic disease, states.

Community Healing in Assisted Living

So we know that loneliness and isolation is the number one risk factor when it comes to all cause mortality. So death for many causes, right. And the a lot of times in our group sessions, in fact, I'm in a room right now because my main, my main room is used in a tight group right now.

Like I see them and they're happy a lot of times. For a lot of them, the only time it gets really interact with people at this deep level is in our facility, right.

And so because of that, you're creating this community and you creating this bond. And one of the coolest part about like what we do is a lot of, a lot of the things that people are saying, we are able to capture that information and build upon it.

So I'll give you a really good example. James. We have this patient that comes in, Korean War veteran and, loss of spouse about 11, 12 years ago. And then some of them known for a very long time.

And he's saying that, well, you know, not only is my mood better, my memory is intense and seems to be getting better. I'm more engaged with the people around me and the people's the romance that I actually look younger.

And he's like, you know what? I feel like this mass is kind of lifted off and I don't have to, like, just be so harsh and protect myself anymore, right?

You know, the guy is over nine years old. It's really fun to actually hear something like that makes a huge impact on our, our community. And another really interesting fact is that hospitalizations, your visits are actually less in the group visits.

And so the people come together in a group, we're able to not just get more access to them on a weekly basis. Once someone that's been showing up for five weeks in a row, all of a sudden week number six and seven, not showing up, someone's going to be reaching out.

Like our team was like, hey, hey, what's going on? Right? So we've got inconsistencies that are there and believe or not, a lot of times we have found people that required a lot of emergency services.

Right. But over time, what happens is people feel like they're they're in a group, their immune function gets better, their need for hospitalization goes down.

And as you see the group grow, there's people who maybe 1 to 2 years ahead of the new people coming in, and they're providing that community support. It's almost like the chain like keeps moving, right.

The legacy kind of keeps moving for them, and it gives them a sense of tremendous amount of purpose in the groups. And I think that's something that's really, really fun to watch.

Over the last eight years, we've been doing groups. Oh, wow. Look, I think you got so much to add for, you know, obviously doing this so effectively and that I guess what I'd love to do just because it's you and I know you and I know how much you think about these things.

You know, this summer, it's called reversing Alzheimer's. And ultimately, you know, we we hope that there's some scale that can really come to this. And I guess I just maybe finish off by just maybe you sharing a vision of what do you think health care would have to look like in order to really turn the corner here?

I mean, obviously everywhere you're seeing, you're seeing the numbers going up. It's getting earlier, it's getting worse. What would it look like in the sort of, in the, in the, in the end state where we have, a health system that is able to help people either avoid Alzheimer's altogether or only have to deal with at the very end of their life.

What do you see that that would have to happen for that to work? Yeah. Good question. I think with Alzheimer's and memory loss, a big part of it is how complex it is.

Right? Well, there's one piece of technology that can make very complex, ideas come to life, and that's artificial intelligence. And, you know, I've been working with AI for a very long time and looking how AI is able to analyze the patient histories and documentation.

Even the AI actually on the front end can even quote unquote talk to the patients though, right? It's able to ask things such as, hey, how's your teeth been?

Any bleeding gums? Right. That's it. Bleeding gums is a huge, huge question there. That's should be part of every neurological assessment. The only bleeding gums and these periodontal issues and cause can cause a lot of times declined.

And then what is the mental health like. We now know. And this is you know, February 2025. We now know that a lot of people are more comfortable talking to an intake AI than they are talking to their doctor.

AI and the Future of Alzheimer's Care

We now know that's the thing. Before it was sort of a mystery. And so on over. We're looking at people talking into the AI or typing. We can get information from them.

The family members, other, other com historians, basically people able provide the history. Right? We're able to see a lot of different points of view and that gives us the ability to analyze that large amount of data.

Plus, the AI is also absorbing information from their medical records, hospitalizations. Right. What was the last MRI was the last Pet scan, etc., etc..

Right. And other records from the neurologists, from the psychiatrist, whatever it is. Right. And so this large amount of information used to be very taxing, overwhelming for clinicians.

Now we now like it because the more we can get into the AI, the more we can ask the AI to retrieve some of this information. How really applies the patient.

And so it's going to make something that's drastically, drastically too complex to execute on. Something is a lot easier in bite sized chunks. And that's what we've been seeing. Right.

So imagine this. Imagine that. Let's say you have a family member that has Alzheimer's disease is maybe not talking very much. And you can, get access to an app or an AI that says, hey, you know, tell me the story of what's been going on, and you have no time limitations with the, you can tell the story for an hour and a half.

Want to write all the information gets compartmentalized and extracted so that when you actually meet the doctor, they are able to to already have so much information that's there.

And you spend a lot of time on figuring out like, what's next so drastically reduces the cost of care, improves implementation on the backend. What happens is that because the AI knows this person's, information, it's able to track longitudinally, meaning say, how did the person do?

What was the MRI like a few months later? Right. So what happens is that we as doctors can go into and say, hey, how's this patient been doing? I literally talk them to it like a Starburst or something.

Right. How's this patient have been doing extracting that information. So lets us know, are we going on the right track? There's something that we had to pivot, move and change.

And that's the only way I can think by moving forward how we can, you know, practice medicine. So for those of you who are terrified of I agree, there's there's a bit of a terror to it because sometimes you'd be unpredictable.

But what I'm saying is AI is already used in multiple other industries. I think doctors are a little bit late to the game, but using it for retrieving the information, understanding and then executing on it, I think has to be where the future is going, arguably has to be where the present is going.

Awesome. Well, Doc, I really want to appreciate you for sharing your wisdom here on the, Reversing Alzheimer's Summit. I feel a lot more excited and happy about the future, knowing that there's pioneers like yourself doing it, and it's going to take a big team to execute on it.

I think what we've hearing on this summit is all the different, you know, clinical, leading edge insights to help any person avoid it for themselves or their family.

But ultimately it is going to take, you know, the building of a new system. And I think you got a lot of the elements there that are already working with them.

Yeah. I just wanted to thank you for being on the on the cutting edge. I know it's not always easy to try new things and, and do those things, but I know a ton of value gets delivered to everyone from all of your innovation.

Closing Remarks

So thank you so much. Yeah thank you Jules. Preciate you having me on I appreciate it. This is being the, reversing Alzheimer's Summit. I'm one of your host, James Maskell.

If this was interesting to you, and you have someone in mind that you think may have a hidden dental infection, or maybe, you know, some of this information is is useful.

Make sure to forward it to them. And, check out some of the other sessions happening today and tomorrow on the summit. We've got great speakers all week.

Thanks so much for tuning in. And we'll see you next time.