The Diagnosis You Missed: Your Own Story Transcript

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Opening on fatigue, mood, and longevity

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Whether it's your gut, whether it your hormones, just all of it to optimize it, to bring that energy back, give you that feeling of being happy back. All of that really, because if you carry those feelings, forget day after day, I mean forget year after year, but even on a daily basis, it can change so much of your epigenetics.

What if aging isn't about slowing down, but leveling up? I'm Dr. Izzy Jones. This is the Longevity Leaders Podcast. Welcome everybody to the longevity leaders podcast.

I am your host Dr Rudy Mueller and we have Dr Christina with us today. Um, I would love to hear a little bit more of we've talking prior to, uh, recording of this.

So I want to know more about your journey into what led you here to United States and, and maybe your background on your education and how you got here.

Dr. Christinau2019s international medical journey

Sure. So I'm a physician in internal medicine by training. I have had a pretty global experience. I started out with my undergraduate years in Canada, which is where I am from, in Toronto.

And once I did my undergrad degree there, I actually wanted a bit of a change in scenery and I ended up doing my medical schooling in England. Awesome, which is quite exciting and I thought I'm gonna stay there.

This is really great. I love the place I loved the country and i started doing my training in London England, but my family were trying to encourage me to come home and they were going to change some of the licensing structures in Canada and make it harder to get back.

And I went, oh, if I'm going do it, I'll do now. So I got into a competitive residency program there, and that's where I finished most of my training before I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, which is where i am now, so I finish my residency and fellowship there and then started practicing in Atlanta, and they don't make it easy for physicians.

So along the way, I was writing board exams, not only where I residing in, but also where i was going to go next. And unfortunately, it's just not one or two, But it was such a humbling journey because in the space that I'm in now, which is personalized longevity medicine, it gives you this perspective of the challenges that patients face with their health and really the importance of preventative care.

It really dials in that it's not something that's local, It is something worldwide. Because the problems that I was seeing, whether it's England, Canada, here, it is all the same.

And my nationality is Sri Lankan. I go there at least once a year. All of these factors and principles that we try to implement in preventative care can really be changed.

and change their life. So we talk about longevity being not just your lifespan, but it's your health span, right? Because we don't want you just living longer, we want your living as well as possible.

And these things can impact people worldwide. It's really important that you can teach them that preventative care to buy back time and energy for their lives.

And so I'm curious about through your experience from Canada to the UK to states, did any particular location emphasize more preventative type of care or were they all missing the boat on that?

Why preventative care is missing globally

I think they were all missing the boat really. You know, England is, in terms of healthcare systems, it's publicly funded and publicly administered. And then Canada is publicly-funded, but it is privately administered, and then the United States is private funded, privately-administered.

But as a practicing physician, you know, you encounter the exact same issues. There's going to be its disparities in health, there's food deserts the same way, all of it exists, obviously in different scales and, whether it's in how much further you go to see that disparity, but It's not just what they have access to, but it's what their know that's the right thing to do.

There's just a big knowledge gap that, you know, the world is picking up and we're getting more people interested in this type. It is making our job easier, which is so nice.

And it means that you can have these conversations. save yourself some time almost, you know, in convincing people to make this change. But across the world, it is hard to push people, to understand you want to invest in your health.

I think the one thing I do see, though, is that In the United States, people know that healthcare costs can be high. And so sometimes they're a little bit more forthcoming with spending on their health because they might be used to that, whether it's their insurance payments, But it's a little bit harder of a kick, I would say, in England and Canada.

That makes a lot of sense. Yeah. Because they're not used to having to pay for it. They're no used it to it, like I will push, because you know a a of my network is still Canadian based and I do a lots of consults for people in Canada as well.

to try to convince someone to pay even in Canada. Most of your labs are covered through their, you know, general system. It's called OHIP, but even encourage them to do something like their vitamin D level, which costs $25. I'm like, it includes payment, You know?

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. it's a hard shift in their mind. That's really interesting. I mean, it makes complete sense. But it's also cool to hear that this preventative medicine is something that's being, is growing, right?

Virtual personalized medicine and patient timelines

And when we talk about easier conversations, when were having patients come in, I means, obviously from a referral is always the easiest, but as you're having new patients, come and they've been listening to your content or they're a little bit familiar, becomes that easier conversation and conversion for them.

Absolutely. Yeah. So where are you? I mean, right now, if you're practicing Atlanta and you are meeting with people in Canada, I'm assuming you doing some virtual consultation.

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Yeah, I would say about 90% virtual. There's still a few patients that I see in person for various reasons, but my practice is predominantly virtual, offer personalized care.

The ability to do this type of medicine, I think the biggest thing it gives patients is time, time for them to share their stories. And when they share those stories in a deeper level, so you're not just shuffled in and out in 10 to 15 minutes, you gain a lot more knowledge about where their health journey possibly started becoming deranged.

and where their pivoting moments were. And you can take that and really personalize their care. I tell my patients all the time that even if you have the exact same lab results as your neighbor, you would not be on the same plan because your story is not the Same.

That includes their testing options, their supplement plans, medication options or peptide options. Any of it is all just very personalized because they tell their story, and it's from their stories that you can extrapolate what it that is going to really help with their health journey.

Yeah, yeah. And that timeline, right? We utilize a timeline. I don't know if that's… Yeah. 100%. Yeah yeah, you map it out. We ask questions. You know, we're all doing this.

the state of their mother's health, like even if they're 70, was your mom stressed when she was pregnant with you? What was you early childhood years like?

Just all of that has an impact on your gut microbiome, your dopamine status, all I think one of the most rewarding experiences besides helping somebody get better and experience your health is that first consultation when you walk through the timeline and you retell the story to that patient.

and you give them these aha moments and that trust that you feel and then often results in tears, whether it be for both the practitioner or the patient, it's got to be one of the most rewarding things that I've ever experienced, right?

And I'm so blessed to do it on a daily basis. We're in a very privileged state to be, you know, trusted with this story that they share of their entire life journey.

And yeah, countless times they're, it's brought both of us to tears in these discussions. They finally feel heard. Yeah. Right. That's amazing. Cool. Sorry, that was my own little selfish bit because it just, An amazing thing to be able to experience that I don't think people realize how impactful this can be.

And so, you know, for practitioner, I'm talking to other practitioners that don' practice this way. I'd be curious to get your input on what you would recommend, but I think that the timeline is a great approach.

Obviously getting education around functional medicine, longevity to have a good background there. But just having that time to listen to your client with the timeline is a phenomenal approach where you're able to lay out, you know, birth history, preconception, what was their mother's health like, et cetera, and then moving forward in that.

Listening deeply and changing practitioner mindsets

And was there a discerning point where he started to feel unwell? I mean, is that if you had to give a recommendation to a practitioner that doesn't practice, You know, I still practice in the hospital, actually.

Do you really? I didn't know that. I do some part-time work in a hospital and really the hospitals is where a lot of the foundation of my career was because I did inpatient care and I'll still do it to this day.

Is it ER work? Internal medicine. In the United States we call it the hospitalist. But covering critical care, covering inpatient units, I still do this.

So on a daily basis I would encounter colleagues who either are not thinking this way or don't believe all of these strategies. fuels my passion in this realm because when I meet these patients who've had a stroke that you could have, that shouldn't have happened.

You know, I just walked out of the talk about end-stage renal disease in somebody's mother because their diabetes

wasn't well controlled. You wonder, sure, a lot of this is patient choices, you know, empowering them to know that it's reversible, they can do something about it, but it is also the practitioners, right?

And so, to make them believe the importance of diet, exercise, and you prescribing another medication for their uncontrolled hypertension or their uncontrolled diabetes is not necessarily the right next step is so valuable.

But in terms of what we can teach practitioners, I think is A, all the other things that you can have in your toolkit that doesn't need to involve a medication, and B, is truly listening.

So I think an extra five minutes with somebody, which is hard because if you're purely insurance-based and this is not the care that they're trying to dictate, But in that extra five minutes, you can probably find something that's reversible or that is changeable to really impact these patients in a positive way.

Are you noticing practitioners that are your colleagues in these hospitals? adapting at all to what you're saying? I think they are. There's more and more physicians in even the sub-specialized fields that are really, they're really listening and finding like you guys are onto something, like there's something real about this.

You're right. I don't have to give another ACE inhibitor or a beta blocker and I can actually, their heart is racing because of and imbalance in one of their micronutrients.

And so listening to these conversations and doing the work we're doing, which is trying to spread the message, I think is getting there. It's working.

We need to keep doing it. Absolutely. I remember 12 years ago is when I first started getting into going to conferences for functional medicine and learning more.

Okay, I still feel like we're growing, we are growing. And then more MDs, more DOs. People that were traditionally medically trained started to adapt more and adopt our thought process a little bit more.

A gut-health success story and H. pylori treatment

So it's so nice to hear. I got goosebumps. Yes, absolutely. We're seeing it more in the hospital system. It's wonderful. Yeah. I mean, 15 years ago, if you had told me that fatigue or energy or mood was going to be the primary complaint that I would be so passionate to change and heal, I wouldn't have said absolutely not.

Go have some more caffeine. Yeah. And you know, now this is what I say, like you've got low energy, you got fatigue, your mood is off. There's a reason for that.

It's not that you need more Caffeine or you needed an antidepressant. there's so much work that we could do together that will really help you, bring you balance.

Whether it's your gut, whether it your hormones, just all of it to optimize it, to bring energy back, give you that feeling of being happy back. Because if you carry those feelings, forget year after year, but even on a daily basis, it can change so much of your epigenetics.

Even from an individual perspective, knowing that my thought process could really do a 360, I know that the ripple effect can continue. Yeah, for sure.

I'm curious, when we're talking about your having a virtual practice, What is the ideal client, or even if you're willing to, share a client's story, success story that you've had recently, maybe some challenges that came up?

Is that something you'd be willing do? Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So my ideal clients is, because I'm an internist by trade, I am used to seeing everything.

You know, you walk into the day, and you actually don't know what you are getting, age-wise, gender- wise,

whatever. But one of my favorite recent client stories is a young guy in his just turned 40, came to me with a lot of vague energy and mood symptoms.

And he said it was because his eczema was so bad and it's a skin issue. We said, okay, sure, let's start from the beginning. Let's do this timeline. uncovered that he went on this international trip when he was in his early teen years.

And since then, his gut actually wasn't normal. When I was talking about what's normal bowel movement, and I don't know if any of this is TMI, but all of that, Basically, we uncovered that there's a lot of work in his gut that we had to do.

Simple thing like regulating it, giving back the microbiome diversity that he needed. I've had my third follow-up call with him just last week and he has more energy.

His eczema is no longer an issue and he has regular bowel movements and has that much more energy to get through the day and do the things he wanted to do.

It's often the story they come with you being like, this is what I want you to fix, but I asked for permission and get them to take that step back and be like can I explore different avenues with If you've struggled with energy or fatigue or depression or anxiety, any changes in your mood, even if you don't label it as such, you often feel like you know what the reason is.

Or it might be that you tried all the things and you truly are stuck, but it's so variable. I surprise myself with the thing I find to fix that really help them.

Yeah. Well, the impact is so much greater than what their one focus is. Yeah, so it's so better than it was just fixing the skin.

How to contact the practice and closing remarks

No, we fixed the gut that was actually a lingering thing that he had experienced for multiple decades that… he thought was normal. Or that became part of his normal, that now his norm is…

so elevated. Yeah, yeah. So was it an opportunistic, like it was an infection? Yeah. Yeah he had a massive overgrowth of H. pylori. Oh yeah, okay. Fair enough.

And like really low, because of the opportunity, the overgrow, he really had low commensal bacteria. And so we were able to fix that and within three months the guys jumped up and down.

Yeah, so like massive, like, you know, and then… They didn't have to go on testosterone? Yeah exactly, right? Right, yeah. That's amazing. Cool. So for anyone that's listening that is interested in potentially pursuing a consultation with you, working with, whether it be in the Atlanta area, in Canada, London, anywhere across the United States, what's the best way that they can reach out to you?

Yes, send us a message. We do discovery calls, whether it's via the phone or Zoom. You know, we do those sessions, so you can send an email at our practice, support at extendmedical.com.

Go on our website, you know. Get more information. It's extend medical. com. Or give us call, yeah. Happy to meet people, because at the end of the day, what we're trying to do is Make people understand that optimal living should be your normal.

If there's something bothering you, making you feel off. you should validate it and address it because so many times people go to the doctor or they seek help and they're being told that things are normal based on what we call normal lab values and I know you know this well but we look at things from an optimal lens and so if it's not optimal and you fix it then actually you become so much better for yourself.

And then that translates, right? I help a lot of entrepreneurs and that, translates not just for themselves, but then their partners or families, their businesses, and then the businesses include their employees.

Right. So the ripple effect even for them is huge. Yeah, so please, if you're struggling with any health condition or any symptom that you feel like it's not you, then come check us out.

Yeah, if you're told you are normal, come see her. You're normal but she got something off. Right. All right. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thanks for listening to the Longevity Leaders podcast.

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