Introduction to the thyroid and mast cell connection

Hello. Welcome back to the Heal your thyroid and reverse Hashimoto's summit. I am Dr. Jen and we're going to talk about the thyroid in mass cell connection.

So this is a such a complex but interesting and crucial topic. So we have Alison Vickery here to talk with us about this today. And Alison has been working in the area of histamine, intolerance, autoimmunity and mast l'activation for well over a decade.

And like many practitioners, her journey into the wellness field started with her own health crisis, and this was due to a series of adverse medication reaction.

So, Alison, welcome to the summit. And we would love to have you share your story. Yes. Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to share what I know and very excited to speak to you.

And thank you for pulling this summit together. So let me just explain a little bit about my story, which is one of I was working in a corporate role.

I was incredibly stressed. I was unhappy. I didn't like what I was doing. And then I started not sleeping. Surprise, surprise. So, you know, in many ways, like many of my clients, stress got out of control.

And so I did what everyone of my friends did, which was I went to the doctor and basically I was given medication to sleep, which was sleeping tablets.

Unfortunately, though, I have a genetic situation where I cannot process that medication. And so I had delirium. So if you think about a little old lady in a nursing home, that was me.

Alison Vickeryu2019s health crisis and healing journey

And I just after struggling through the medical system because, you know, at least in Australia, they're not very well trained in adverse medication reactions.

I had an immunologist take one look at me and say, you being poisoned, it's the medication. Yes. And he said to me, you need to learn how to keep yourself well without medication.

And I went, Hey, wait a minute, I'm sick. But I think that's amazing. I mean, for a day or two, I mean, I think that that oh, my gosh. Because usually they put you on more medication so and.

So for him. Yeah, he was at a stage in his career where he didn't really care what anyone thought he had in Australia we have those all Australian orders for, you know, so he was at the top of his game and he just told me the way it was.

And so the penny dropped that I was busy getting sick rather than busy getting healthy. And I was busy getting sick because I didn't know how to get myself healthy.

And I think this is something that often goes wrong for a lot of our clients, that because we've got symptoms, we do sick things like take medication or join support groups of other sick people or whatever.

And I decided that what I was going to do was sell my house. I was living in Sydney and I've moved, I moved to an area of Australia that's renowned for its healing and I just went, I'm going to learn how one heals from who ever is willing to teach me.

And I've had so many mentors from leading physicians at the top of their game. There's at least three or four others in Australia that have really supported me to people at local farmers markets teaching me how to use food to friends, sharing their story.

So I made a decision right from the outset that because I have a brain injury, although it's largely reversed, that that was not going to be my life and so I think this optimism and determination and belief, you know, I call that sort of a bit of me that's a bit Pollyanna ish or, you know, whatever.

This optimism was really important to me moving forward. And so today I've reversed all sorts of things that I'm supposed to be able to be reversed simply by giving my body an environment where it can heal and where healing is possible.

And so that's really my story. And I've gone on to advocate for change in the area of adverse medication reactions, which I've found to be very healing for me in terms of telling my story so simplistically, I think we all need to make a decision as to whether we really want to be healthy or we really want to be sick, because I think we have three options.

The first door number one is we go through, get on medication and we wait to get sick or psycho. Door number two is we do it with supplements and or number three, which is the the door that I open for people is to walk through it and really be healthy.

And that requires habits, it requires personal commitment, and it requires really creating an environment where we're healing as possible. And from that place, I've reversed chronic fatigue syndrome.

I've largely reversed my brain injury. I had chronic insomnia and cortisol issues are best that of reverse mold illness simply by putting my body into an environment where healing is possible.

And yeah, so that's sort of my story. Yeah. Alison, thank you for sharing that so beautiful. And I love all the pearls that you gave in there. And I think that people will probably go back and listen to this again.

The wisdom you spoke. And I think that's the hard part. Like I still work in the emergency room and, you know, I have these conversations with patients in the emergency room that a doctor has never had with them.

You know, that healing is possible. And, you know, going to the hospital is not where you go to get well. It starts at home and with nutrition and mindset.

So I think that sometimes people have not heard this. So they're coming to this summit trying to figure out how to heal their thyroid and get better and heal their fatigue.

And they need to know this, that, like you said, that it takes work, it takes commitment, but you have to be committed. You have to believe because if you don't believe, then like you kind of said, you're not going to step through that door.

So I just love your story. Yeah, thank you. And you know, something I ask myself daily is, am I doing this because I, I have a belief that I'm sick or am I doing this because I really am creating a healthy environment?

And it's you know, that's something I would really encourage people to do. And regardless of how sick you are, you can still create a healing environment.

It doesn't mean you have to give up medications. That wasn't an issue. That wasn't an option for me. Medications weren't an option for me. But it all starts with, you know, health happens on a spectrum.

Medication and medicine has its role, but so does self-care. And so it is healing. Yes, it's kind of like that analogy with the fish tank, you know, if your fish tanks dirty, what do you do?

You clean the fish tank, you clean. It's its environment. So, you know, we just kind of we disregard that in medicine, you know? I mean, it's it's tough, but it's the hard things to do.

It's a hard conversations and it takes time. So you might not get that from your conventional doctor. You might need a health coach, you might need an integrative or functional doctor, you know, and that's what people have to realize.

It does take them. Yeah. And I had that conversation with one of my best friends today, her daughter sick. And I'm like, you know, it's going to it's going to take commitment financially.

It's going to take commitment emotionally. It's it's not easy to get to get well, sometimes, but it's so possible and worth it. And what's the option?

You know, for me, not being able to speak in a full sentence and not having, you know, autonomy and not having energy to do the things I loved in life was just not an option.

And, you know, so I would encourage people to be just curious, curious about what health, you know, what could happen if they create a healing environment.

And it doesn't have to be expensive. It can just be simple things that transform into a habit. Yeah. So that's that's what I learned, certainly. Yeah, that's great.

And I appreciate that story so much. I think it's really going to resonate with so many people.

Why healing requires commitment and a supportive environment

So let's get into the the awesome stuff that you are so well versed at and know personally. And we're going to talk about and and Allison is going to share some slides.

So we're going to talk about the connection between thyroid and massage issues. So this will be such a treat. So what I've done is just for people watching because I used to be a chartered accountant, so I like a good graph and I'm quite a visual learner.

So what I did actually last year was analyze my last 40 clients and I ran out of that point as to what was driving my selective action and I have actually for the summit analyzed my last 20 clients.

Unfortunately, they're different people as to what was happening with their thyroid. So I thought I'd just sort of share that in my world, I can categorize all my clients into three buckets leaky gut, which I see a lot of autoimmunity or blocked regulation.

Now muscle activation is really the same as blocked regulation for reasons I'll explain shortly. And one of the interesting things is one of the first traditional labs that a client might have as they're on that path from autoimmunity to blocked regulation is abnormal thyroid markers.

And so I think that's really interesting that if we think about the thyroid as part of that adaptive mechanism, because what I'm the overriding point I'm going to make today is that with muscle activation, what we have is a loss of regulation.

So we're talking about the so danger response, which I'll go through shortly. And so standard thyroid interventions don't work because it is a loss of regulation and I'll come on to that shortly, but I would encourage you to all think of these three buckets.

And I also sort of almost see this as, you know, a spectrum. So people's leaky gut can progress to autoimmunity and can progress to blocked regulation if things are severe enough.

And I thought this just might be interesting and I won't linger on it for too long. But what's really interesting is this chart shows the main causes of autoimmunity and what resonances or what existed in clients.

And I know this slide is a little difficult to read, so I'm just going to take you on to the causes of autoimmunity in my client base and unsurprisingly list this top row are all gut gut based.

So you can data parasites bartonella. Bartonella exists in about 60% of my client base. For those that don't know Bartonella gives you a leaky, leaky, leaky gut.

So throwing a probiotic at Bob Abagnale a client is like throwing an ice cube on a bushfire and obviously bacteria, small representation of metals, mostly mercury and a reasonable representation of retroviruses, viruses and mold.

There may be other things present, but these were the things that were the tipping, tipping points. So obviously we've got a situation where a lot of these are affecting that gut brain axis, which will become important shortly.

And, you know, and obviously retrovirus is and viruses and mold are really suppressing the immune system. Wow. This is really fascinating, Alison. So now how are you?

Are you lumping Lyme in with bacteria or not? You finding bartonella more so. We know that. Yeah, this has got this is got and it can be elsewhere, you know, because parasites do die will cease shortly.

Do you go to other places but bartonella are and particularly for the thyroid, every client with bartonella will have thyroid issues often slip flopping between hyper and hypo.

So if I have a client with leaky, leaky gut and I get a lot of clients that have had exceptionally good advice and labs about gut issues, but the piece they've been missing is Bartonella.

And as she can see, Bartonella, it was present in, you know, over half of my client base. It also causes you have gold stools of lymph nodes in your lips.

And as I said, you have flip flopping. It can be not only of the thyroid, it can be blood glucose, it can be lots of other things. And the reason is that Bartonella causes a loss of regulation and and particularly to the autonomic nervous system.

So as we move down the scale, Borrelia is the other thing, you know, that may cause thyroid issues or autoimmunity here, but that's under 10% of the cause.

I think that was about 7.5 covered. May be underrepresented in this this picture. We know that COVID absolutely escalates anything that's in place. And I think these 40 clients probably straddled, covered.

Nearly all of my clients are gluten free when they come to me. But when I say gluten free, not completely gluten free, and that is usually problematic.

So we see the others like Bob's your Rickettsia, LGA and other co-infections being, you know, less represented.

Client patterns: gut issues, autoimmunity, and thyroid dysfunction

So I would encourage people, if they see clients with leaky, leaky, leaky, leaky, leaky gut brain axis to test clients for bartonella and to know that the thyroid will be impacted by Bartonella.

What a great graph. I think that really lays out what people are dealing with. And like you said, it could be missed. Can hit us so high, you know, and that one is and it can come back.

So that's one thing that, you know, I don't know if you've noticed, but, you know, I try to tell patients that Candida can come back, parasites can come back, but we know how to deal with it, you know, because sometimes people

will go through a stressful life event and their gut will will become a mess again.

And that definitely can happen. So I think that just I'm sure you do like I do, we we teach our clients and patients what to do and how to get back to health.

Yeah. And I think the gut is of paramount importance and something we will see shortly is that got a thyroid connection and I put gut protection in long term.

So you know, certainly with things like Bartonella, it may take 2 to 3 years to treat it, but I am inclined just to let a load. I mean, you know, it's like taking a multivitamin.

You know, I'm 61, I protect my dog. You know, my diversity is good. I don't have canned data, I don't have parasites. But the multivitamins I'm taking are around protecting my God.

It's that important. So I don't think we should be thinking that, you know, we fix the diet and then we can go back to eat, include eating gluten and not having to at least do some sort of maintenance on on our diets.

And I think the other thing that's probably worth noting is that I'm not, you know, because I get a lot of clients coming to me. They've got a fistful of labs, you know, they've got an item on a lab that's off and that suddenly, you know, the focus of their attention, you know, and the reality is that our body can handle a certain amount of of stresses, be they toxins or parasites.

But it's about the tipping point. And what this graph tells me is that some things are far harder on the body than others. So we really and, you know, clearly things that affect the gut one, two, three and four on this list.

That's certainly the way I experience it, that some things matter, others don't. If we get the body semi working, then the body can take care of certain things.

So is glyphosate a big deal in Australia? I'm just thinking. Yeah it is. It is. I, I haven't got Clive Forsythe on here and what I've noticed personally is that, you know, when I was testing clients three years ago in Australia and I work with clients all over the world, so this is a, you know, well why do you barely find any glyphosate?

What's happening now is it's through the roof, so it's literally off off the charts. And is that something you're saying to Jim? Yeah, it's it's everywhere.

I mean, it's in the rainwater. I mean, I've tested people that eat so clean, even cleaner than my family eats, and they still have glyphosate, you know?

I mean, it's just if it's 50%, it usually actually like in the 75th percentile, that's when they're like, okay, we're worried about, you know, an exposure, but everyone has it.

It's like you can't avoid it. So and that's that's going to be kind of getting at your gut health. So like you said, yet you always kind of have to be protective with your gut health, like, you know, make sure your stress is low and make sure you're taking your pre and probiotics, make sure your diet at point and avoid obvious sources of glyphosate if you can.

It's it's so tough right now in the world right. So yeah, I mean, I think life loss but where I've got to is glyphosate is a fact. Now I heard Stephanie said of saying that by diesel is now sort of making glyphosate, releasing glyphosate into the environment.

What if I miss that I'm sorry, bio diesel. So diesel. It is now. And that's what I raised to solve causing the levels that I'm saying because my clients are reading organic and doing all of that.

So something is releasing it into the environment. And then the other thing I'm a bit suspicious about, but this is just me with little pieces of the puzzle that don't quite fit together.

But we know that both Clover and glyphosate share the same pathway. And so I, I don't know. Anyway, I think that's just cure. I'm just curious about that. Yes.

I have noticed that as well. It is it is a fact. Now, in my humble opinion. So really, when we're talking about muscle activation in my world, we're talking about the so danger response, which is a beautiful piece of research done by Navajo now, but I can never say that name properly.

And so this is what I see playing out in my client base.

Bartonella, gut disruption, and common autoimmune triggers

And the real thing to keep in mind is that it's the autonomic nervous system that regulates the body and the cells and the immune function. And so what is actually happening is an adaptation in order to to restore that cell to health, which starts with an adaptation.

And so I see PI roles, methylation acetylation issues and so on. I think we could probably add in iron and other nutrients as a cell adapting and trying to fix itself.

So a lot of my clients with muscle activation have parole issues, will shortly see what detoxification effects they do have. But payrolls is rampant in my client base and it does reverse.

As we reverse the while, it often reverses. We also see mitochondrial changes. And this is one touch point where I think the thyroid interrelate because we know that there is that connection between the mitochondria in the thyroid with the mitochondria controlling energy within the cell.

And the thyroid is controlling energy within the body and will shortly see a pattern of that playing out as an adaptation in the muscle community. And then we have this anti-corrosion phase which we do control with muscle stabilizers.

So all of these phases are being gone through by the cell in order to try and heal and repair it. So I really work on what is this regulating the cell and can we remove that rather than chasing lots of nutrients in order to repair the cell and bring it back online?

And that's what I personally know works. So I'm pretty much working in that cell danger response model. But we know that, you know, Navajo says that the vagus nerve comes offline as the cell tries to repair itself and is the last to come back online.

I think it's a little wider. The vagus nerve is part of the autonomic nervous system, and so I focus on the autonomic nervous system. So so if we look at what is blocking regulation, these are these same 40 clients and what we can see is so 15 of those 40 when they came to me had open regulation.

So they were leaky gut or autoimmunity. 23.5 was toxicity blocking them, 15% was covered. That's probably under under estimated in these numbers, 15% retroviruses, 7.5 leaky gut brain 7.5 small intestine and 5% alignment code.

Now, this doesn't mean that they didn't have other things. This was the tipping point and the loss of regulation is caused by any assault that is greater than the body can cope with in that moment.

So what we can see or what I see in this graph is toxicity and things that all of the immune systems so convert retroviruses and things that interfere with the gut brain axis being leaky gut brain, small intestine and Lyme and co so interfering with that autonomic nervous system regulation as blocking clients.

So just very quickly going to move through these because this is an overriding slide that I'll linger on. So look at all these detoxification defects.

44.5 had parallels. We stopped testing parallels when COVID was present. So that number is probably lower 33.5 acetylation defects, 20% methylation. So we talk a lot about methylation, but less about these other detoxification defects.

And 60% had liver flukes and 13.5 lung flukes. Now, the importance of that is that we know that parasites, when in the presence of a leaky gut, parasites travel to places where there are toxins, they do it to be helpful, but one of the common reasons that people aren't detoxifying efficiently is not just the absence of the nutrients to do it, but actually parasites in either the liver or the gall bladder blocking that process.

And they're easily treated. And often once you treat them and put this support in, people start detoxifying the extremely important thing.

Cell danger response, autonomic dysregulation, and detox blocks

And once again, I will come back shortly with a slide that summarizes the three sort of underlying things is trauma. 95% of clients of those 40% of clients had unresolved trauma, causing a disturbance to their autonomic nervous system.

And I think this is what I have observed is that trauma causes that loss of regulation more than anything else, and it doesn't need to be that way. So reregulating that nervous system and having ways of actually attending to stress is really important.

And I have a view that, you know, when I trace back with a lot of my clients, there is some sort of major traumatic event and trauma is just something that's not resolved.

These are pretty significant traumas, but it can be other things. And we regularly find that once you resolve the trauma, regulation comes back online and the body can actually participate in the healing process and really into the sense.

Yeah, I see this a lot too. And sometimes this is the piece that no one really wants to work on. So we have to revisit it and and talk about it. It's tough.

I mean, it's uncomfortable, but a lot of people have trauma and it could be something really simple. You know, some people would say everyone has trauma.

And I tend to agree with that more now. I do agree. I agree. I mean, what I perhaps the better way of putting this is that, you know, these clients don't have the support around them, all the tools to resolve the trauma, you know, and I'm you know, when clients come to me, I ask the question, you know, I ask the questions about, you know, who is there for them and, you know, what's happened in their life and whatnot.

And I would encourage those practitioners listening to actually not be afraid to ask the question because what I have mostly found is that there is some clients that are just afraid that if they look at the trauma, they'll fall apart.

But mostly clients are relieved that somebody is going to support them. Sometimes I'm the first person they've ever told and I don't believe that you need to go back to the trauma in order to resolve it.

I believe that things that help regulate the autonomic nervous system are what is important. And so body based interventions. And certainly, you know, if we look at mold illness, I believe that those that traverse, you know, through the detoxification program process have probably got this pace in place, whereas those that really struggle at this pace is nearly always not there, in my humble observation.

And so what I'm going to suggest to you is that we have a picture here where stress, toxins and infections all need to be simultaneously worked on to restore regulation in the mouse.

So community, it is not enough to just dump in you know, I've got a client at the moment who is done. All the

genetics is done. Everything is literally on probably 80 supplements and the stress piece has never been touched and it's the elephant in the room.

So, you know, the way I work is to work on all three simultaneously and pull them all down just gently. And the reason we want to do that is certainly within the model.

I've been taught that what stress does is shut down flow of of organs in cells, which allows toxins to come in and then infections to come into those sites where there are toxins.

We've seen that with liver flukes, but I do believe it happens elsewhere within the body. And I absolutely know this process works. It works. It worked, worked for me.

It's what I follow and it works for for my clients. The biggest difference I notice is getting that stress pace underway. I mean, clients literally come alive before my eyes the minute, you know, resources are put around them to be more stress resilient.

So this is sort of a basic you know, this is this is certainly the way I see regulation and the loss of regulation happening. Yes, it makes a lot of sense.

So if someone's listening to this, what would you say is the most common sign of mass? I'll just regulation. You know, if you could just give the audience some signs and symptoms.

Yeah. So I think the main thing is that there's, you know, there's the cells are hypersensitive to lots of things, hypersensitive to lots of foods, hypersensitive to lots of stimuli, hypersensitive to lots of, you know, to stress, hypersensitive to whatever is going on around them.

Normally, what we will be seeing is there being either a very significant inability to take supplements or foods or sort of an intolerance to stress or pressure in any way is sort of the way I look at it.

So I'm not sure if that's really answering your question because I'm sort of coming at it from, you know, that that regulation space, you could have any symptom because we're talking about a loss of regulation, but we're also talking about things happening a spectrum.

Trauma, stress, and restoring regulation

So lots of clients might have lots of gut issues but not, you know, be able to take lots of supplements, be able to eat just about any food, you know, not have disrupted sleep, not have, you know, an intolerance to any sensory thing, not have, you know, plots or some sort of, you know, change to their nervous system as such.

Does that make sense? What I'm trying to give the top line. And so because yes, if we can I ask, will give me a different symptom for muscle activation, but we come back to that loss of regulation.

So simple things. So someone that's only eating nine foods, only eating ten foods, only eating even 12 foods. Somebody who's intolerant to stress, someone who can't take a supplement.

We're starting to put in that Ms.. So category, if that makes sense. It's a loss of regulation of the autonomic nervous system, so we can even have very idiosyncratic reactions.

So I have a client at the moment, for example, who I know is fine with me sharing his story, who every time she gets stressed, her skin starts itching and itching.

Her skin causes more stress and it's just an endless cycle until we intervene with something. And so she actually has skin kindling. We talk about limb a lot about limbic kindling, but she has skin came kindling.

I have a client who when she takes a binder which she can tolerate, starts crying profusely. So we've just got this

loss of communication in the body is the way I would best describe it.

Yeah. And that's kind of what I want to get at is in things like pots, a lot of times like hives that come out of nowhere. Like you said, it's the dysregulation and people try to put a diagnosis on it and just mask it and put on mass cell stabilizers and all of that.

And yeah, that's okay. Short term to get them, you know, in a state where they can function, but it's not addressing the root cause. And that's what you really laid out nicely is these are the root causes with your, you know, 24 to 40 clients that you saw.

So that's what's hard for people is and then they become that diagnosis, right? So that's the other problem. They've got to get off that person. You know, if I, I so, you know, I think what I'm really saying is like I like the sort of analogy of, you know, we can probably all imagine those old fashioned scales where you put little weights on and if too many stresses come onto that scale, the body can't actually coordinate responses.

And as you start taking off those weights, the body regains regulation and balance. And one of the things I see all the time, which goes to your point, Jane, is, you know, people trying to chase the immune system around, which is like trying to chase a speck of dust in the in a, you know, storm when it's just simpler to resolve what is on, you know, knocking the body off balance.

And I see it all the time, you know, people coming in with, you know, lots of supplements, lots of tests and then missing what's actually tipping the body over.

And a lot of that's coming from this sickness model of something's wrong with me. What if something was right with you? What if your body actually knew what it was doing, was actually working extremely hard to detoxify, attend to parasites, you know, help you with stress, but needed your self to step in and help.

So that's certainly the model on suggesting works and more importantly I reverse muscle activation all the time remains the cause and the body can do the rest.

Yeah and that's that's the thing. The thyroid wants to heal, the body wants to get back into homeostasis and heal. So I just love how you keep saying, you know, you don't become the diagnosis.

There's other reasons why your body is trying to fight for you. These are it's it's nice, actually. Our body gives us clues that something's off and we can ignore them.

Or, like you said, we could become this diagnosis in disease. Or we can help our body break through them and heal. So I think it's so lovely. Yeah.

Mast cell symptoms, diagnosis, and closing thoughts

And I think that's really important because if I had believed all the diagnoses I've been given of chronic fatigue syndrome and acquired brain injury and all the rest, that would have been who I was.

And so I think the first is an act of loving rebellion. And, you know, I've had a diagnosis of muscle activation syndrome. I work in the area of muscle activation syndrome.

Yeah, I don't believe that diagnosis, if that makes sense. It it does and I love it. And yeah, we can all be rebels like for sure. Yeah. So. Alison, thank you so much for everything shared today.

This was such a great talk and I love the graphs, so I think that that is really special to how you shared your data and all of your expertize. So how can we find you?

We know you're in Australia, which is so cool. I mean I just imagine kangaroos jumping or hopping around stuff and all of that, but it's really cool. I've never been there.

But how can everyone find you other than going on a nice trip to Australia. So they can just come on to my website? Hopefully you will have a link and I will.

So my website is just alisonvickery.com so it's a.com not.com.au and I work with people all over the world, probably half my client base are in the US and the remainder in Australia, in Europe.

So people can come on to my website and I will, you know, make sure I have some information that's relevant on the thyroid. There. Awesome. Thank you so much, Alison.

It's been so great to learn from you. My pleasure. Thank you very much for having me.