There’s a Right Order to Healing: Why Sequence Matters in Chronic Disease Transcript

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Introduction to Lifestyle Medicine

I think something like mitochondrial health, like you said, lifestyle aspects, diet, sleep, overall hydration, basic things like that are almost just as important as any, actually I would say more important, I don't know if you'd agree or not, than what you're gonna give them, right?

I always talk to my patients about things that they can do on their part. I didn't want them to just come and, you know, it's not just give me your money and I'm gonna fix you, You know, we're in this together.

It's a collaboration. Here are things that you can do at home, whether this is, you know getting enough sleep, doing your relaxation exercises, getting exercise in general, making sure that your diet is on point, all these kind of basic things.

Getting outside, it's really important to do all those. So sometimes the basic forms of medicine are the most effective. You're listening to the Lifestyle Medicine Podcast with Dr.

Ivan Rusilko, brought to you by Access Lab, where we explore new perspectives at the forefront of personalized healthcare. Welcome back to the Lifestyle Medicine Podcast.

I'm Dr. Ivan Rusilko. We're powered by Access Medical Labs. If your doctor's not checking your labs, they're not your doctors. And today we got Dr Julia Ward, who is a legend.

So we're going to get into it and find out all about her history and all kinds of fun stuff that she does in her practice as that translates into her lifestyle as well.

Dr Ward thank you so much for being here. Thank you for having me. So I'm curious and I was, I always like to ask this question. How, how has your traditional training changed from over the years to how you practice medicine now?

And give me, give, me an example of, of actually how do you practiced medicine today? Okay, so I was trained in the traditional, you know, insurance-based allopathic style medicine, I went to USC for medical school and you're looking for diagnosis, treatment so you can prescribe a drug, right?

And then I got into functional medicine. It was probably around 2014, I want to say, when I started having some health issues myself.

From Traditional to Functional Medicine

I was feeling really chronically fatigued, rundown, and it was about the time where the changes, it's like perimenopause for me, was starting to happen.

And I just wasn't getting any… you know, good answers from my OBGYN or anyone else in traditional medicine. So I started researching bioidentical hormones and then I kind of stumbled upon functional medicine and I was like, wow, this just makes so much more sense.

And that just kind started my journey down that road and absolutely love it. I mean, it really reignited my passion for medicine because everything just did seem to make more since.

And as I got more into the functional medicine and looking at systems a lot more closely, a little more in detail, I

realized that for chronic disease, you actually have to approach things differently than what we were trained.

The traditional model is all about chasing symptoms with drugs or treatments. Whereas the functional medicine route is, is really getting to the root cause of what's going on.

And I think at first, when I first started doing functional, I was doing more of a like, okay, replacing drugs with supplements. Um, and it wasn't, you know, And then you're like well, am I, Am I really helping here or anything?

Really? Yeah, are we really changing anything? And then I started diving deeper into things, getting into mitochondrial health and systems-based sort of analysis.

And even the last year, focusing more on nervous system and getting that calmed down and regulated before moving forward with other treatments. So yeah, that's kind of how it's, now I'm much more into a systems-based, a sequencing kind-of a thing, because not everybody is ready to just do a detox.

And I think that that what we, you know, I see a lot of patients come and they say, well, i've tried everything before. I've done the detox, have done this and that, and it just didn't work.

It's because we haven't done things in the right order. You know they haven' t looked at things right in order Another big thing too is you have chronic disease and now we're actually realizing that chronic diseases is a collaboration of many different types of issues, you know what I mean?

So I'm kind of curious, in your actual patient demographic, are you seeing this trend of like, one patient comes in with maybe a thyroid issue, but then there's an adrenal issue.

Then there is an estrogen issue and everything actually kind rolls into one. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Definitely patients come in and there's never just one thing.

And that's what when I first started doing bioidentical hormones, and that is what I would do. But I start to see some patients just were not having the benefit that the majority of the patients would have.

They were like, well, I did the pellet and It didn't do a thing for me. I don't feel any different. And I started to realize, you know, those are the patients that have unaddressed inflammation or some other issue going on that we're just not looking at.

So I kind of got away from, I would get a lot of patients who would come in and say, You know, I don't want to do a gut detox. I didn't wanna do anything else.

If only my hormones were tuned up, then I'm sure I would be fine. And so we would do that, and sure enough, they were not fine, you know. They just didn' feel the benefit.

So I started to realize that you really have to address everything and if you don' you're just not gonna get the desired effect. That's the biggest thing.

And like you see a lot of physicians, especially in the traditional markets versus the actual non-traditional markets, even in our wellness space, you'll see, a lotta physicians missing that mark.

So if you could sit there and pinpoint one of the big things in wellness, regenerative, anti-aging, whatever hat we wanna wear, what do you think the bigger thing that traditional, I'm sorry, wellness positions now, where are they really missing, that targeted approach?

Treating the Whole Patient

Well, I don't know. I can't speak for other practitioners what they're doing, but I know that, well, let me back up. Frequently, what's missed is things like looking at the nervous system and how that affects your hormones, your

immune system, and your GI system.

It just affects everything. Until you can kind of calm that down, and get them out of their chronically stressed state, nothing else really works. You know, everything else is sort of a secondary downstream effect from that.

No, for sure. What's your favorite way to actually help treat the actual nervous system? Because you're right. The nervous is probably the biggest thing when it's dysregulated that prevents healing.

So where do you see that, especially in your practice? How do treat that to augment how a patient heals? Yeah, so I like recommending programs like Primal Trust or Annie Hopper's DNRS.

There's a company called BrainHarmony.com that's even more sort of like passive if somebody is just like kind of burnt out with everything and they're like, I can't do another online program.

Everybody these days in Asia. Yeah. I just want something a little more, they need something, a lot more passive to kind help. Brain Harmony will use things like the safe and sound protocol.

It's like a listening protocol that helps. kind of build up the muscles in the inner ear. They convey more cues of safety to the brain. But they also use other technologies like alpha stem, which again helps deliver signals of to brain and I think that's mainly, you know, what it is.

It's like getting patients to feel safe or at least safer than what they've been feeling and recognizing too what's in their past. You know some people have dealt with trauma in past and unless they're kind addressing that, maybe not right away, but eventually.

that that's a big portion of how they heal or don't heal. There's there's kind of an order to everything and I've seen of course I was nerding out you know we're doing some research on you before this and you you mentioned a lot of the order of healing can you explain how first of all what that is and how you actually kind go through and promote that and utilize that in your practice.

Yeah. So again, first addressing the nervous system and seeing where are they? Are they chronically stuck in this fight or flight or shutdowns mode? Or maybe they're not in that mode, but maybe, they need to do some gut healing first or at least open up the detox pathways first.

Because if you just jump to a big detox program, That can mobilize a lot of toxins and if their body doesn't have an exit strategy for those toxins, it can sort of backfire and make things worse.

So you definitely want to make sure that your detox pathways are open, that you're gut is working. And then after that, start with some gentle detox and then go after some toxins or bugs or whatever else is going on there.

Can you explain your approach to prepping somebody to get ready for a detox? I find that super interesting. Yeah. So first, I need to ask them about their digestion and what's going on with that because a lot of people who are chronically ill have digestive issues because it's such a large organ.

And so we want to make sure that they're producing enough bile, that their their phase one and phase two reactions in the liver are supported with nutrients and membrane repair is another big one.

Nervous System Regulation and Healing Order

So I'll put people on things like phosphatidylcholine, something called TUDCA. I love bitters because that again, it's stimulating bile production. You know, using things like balance oil, which is a linoleic acid that helps with the inner mitochondrial membrane.

Some of these things, you know fish oil. These are some of the basics that are just getting people ready for that detox. Now do you pick and choose, so say I'm a 80 year old man coming in looking to detox versus a 20 year-old

athlete.

Is your approach different or is it just straightforward? You have your formulary and this works because it works every time. No, it's very much personalized to the patient.

It's not so much age and gender, but their situation, how bad things are, what else is going on, and what they can handle too. Okay. And did you find that mitochondria play a gigantic part of this?

Because I think mitochondrial health, cellular health if you want to call it that way, I know you deal with that in your practice. Is that something you're looking at and you factor that into the actual detox aspect of it?

I'm not sure if I factor that into but I would say mitochondrial health is definitely a huge factor for so many different things because it's just, you know, obviously it is in every cell.

But you can't just jump straight to revving up the mitochondria because again, sometimes that can backfire on you if you do too much too soon like giving somebody a bunch of NAD plus when they're not ready for it.

Sometimes that can kind of make things worse or even even doing something like a hyperbaric oxygen therapy if you do it too soon People can have reactions where not necessarily reactions, but they're just not feeling good.

So No, it makes sense. And so when it comes to actually addressing somebody when you when they are ready for the mitochondrial program Do you have a specific formula for that?

Is it NAD NRNM or is it more lifestyle things like that A lot of it is lifestyle, you know, looking at the diet. I use things like Methylene Blue. Oh, I love it.

You're the first physician on there who's actually went through and said methylene blue for mitochondria. That's my favorite mitochondrial treatment. So great to hear.

Yeah. No, no. I loved methyline blue and it pairs really well with red light therapy. Oh yeah. Um, yeah, so I like that. And I do ozone therapy as well.

that's really good for the mitochondrion and same with the hyperbaric oxygen chamber. Also really Good for, for improving the efficiency of the Mitochondria as Well as generating more Mitech Andria, So it's Actually growing more mitochondrian in your body.

No, yeah, for sure. I think a lot of physicians overlook cellular health and also senolytic health, you know, that's a gigantic one, especially when it comes to detoxing.

So the fact that, I love how mitochondria is such a big part of your practice, because I, think, That's one thing I see a lotta physicians overlooked.

Number one they go through and like NAD for this and that and blah, blah blah. But they really aren't maximizing the patient's ability to utilize NAD, if it comes in there to, utilize a detox if, it is, and I think something like mitochondrial health, like you said, lifestyle aspects, diet, sleep, overall hydration, basic things like that are almost just as important as any, actually I would say more important, I don't know if you'd agree or not, than what you're going to give them, right?

Right, right. I always talk to my patients about things that they can do on their part. You know, I don't want them to just come and, you know it's not just give me your money and I'm going to fix you.

It's, we're in this together, it is a collaboration. And sort of guiding you along the way. And, you know, here are things that you can do at home, whether this is, getting enough sleep, doing your relaxation exercises, and getting exercise in general for making sure that your diet is on point.

All these kind of basic things. Getting outside, walking. Yeah. It's really important to do all those. So sometimes the basic forms of medicine are the most effective.

You know what I mean? Yeah, yeah. Can't forget the basics.

Preparing for Detox and Supporting Mitochondria

Could you expand on your approach to both ozone and hyperbaric oxygen therapy? Yeah, ozone therapy is fantastic. I think the problem with ozone is it just sounds too good to be true.

Exactly. Even though it's been around for a long time, it has never really been mainstream here medicine. So ozone's a medical gas. We create it by running an electrical current through oxygen, and that creates a small percentage of O3.

And O 3 is a very unstable molecule. Basically, it's a free radical. So when you mix this free-radical into your blood, and you can do that outside the body or directly into the blood.

It stimulates your immune system to then rev up and go after other free radicles. There's like a little signal that says, hey, go-after-free-raticals.

And so it revs up the immune systems in a nice, balanced way. But then when it breaks down, it's breaking down to oxygen and water. So you don't have any bad side effects.

And then in addition to that, the ozone is toxic to viruses, bacteria, mold, yeast, and it helps chelate heavy metals. Again, It's a very useful. medical gas.

So I would do, there's many different ways you can use ozone. Two of the main ways that I do is something called ozone dialysis, which is similar to Ibu.

And that's where we're putting an IV in one arm and pulling out the blood and it goes through a system of microtubules. It gets ozonated. Then I actually pass it through something call the hemo lumen which UV radiates the blud.

The UV radiation further is helping to improve ATP production from the mitochondria, it's further killing pathogens. So you're just getting that extra boost and then it goes back into a second IV in the other arm.

And so we filter about like two liters of your blood volume in one sitting. It takes about an hour. That's about a third of you blood And for some people that can bring about really dramatic improvements in their health, especially if they're like acutely sick, like during COVID, I would treat patients with ozone dialysis, and they would get better, just dramatically better.

I also had a pilot who was on disability because after getting the Johnson and Johnson COVID vaccine, he got extreme fatigue to the point where he couldn't get out of bed.

So he was disability for like a month or two and he came to see me. And after the first ozone dialysis, He was 70% better. After the second one, had me sign his paperwork to go back to work.

I love that. That's great. Yeah. I had another patient who came into me with like a long haul COVID kind of picture. He was extremely short of breath.

couldn't speak in full sentences kind of a thing. I was about to send him to the emergency room, but he was already kind plugged into the medical community.

He'd been to a bunch of specialists before, so he didn't really want to go to ER. But we put him on the ozone dialysis and after an hour of sitting there, you could see the color come back into his face and he could speak full in

sentences again.

It was pretty dramatic. How many ozone treatments do you usually prescribe and is it different for everyone? It's different for everyone. There is no standard as far as that goes.

So it's really just on a case by case basis. Is there two months maybe at one time? I mean, can you do it once a week, twice a The most I've done on patients has been like once a week.

Usually it's like cancer patients who want to do that. And it is really limited by your veins. So you have to have two IVs, one in each arm. Some people don't have great veins for one reason or another.

That can be the rate limiting kind of step. The step four. The other way to get ozone in, I mean, there's multiple different ways, but another way that we use quite a bit is direct IV ozone.

And that's where we take a syringe of ozone and we put it on a very tiny needle. This is like a 27 gauge, you know, is meant for, for babies. So it's like meant.

Tiny infants, super tiny. and it's on a butterfly needle as well, and very slowly just push in the ozone gas into the vein. And so because it is mainly oxygen and a little bit of O3, it gets absorbed right away into that bloodstream.

Okay, that's fascinating. Was it like a CML syringe or is it a…? It's like 60cc syringes.

Ozone Therapy in Practice

So we will do anywhere from 20 to 60 cc at a time. Over how long does it actually take you to push? About 10 minutes. Oh, 10 minute, okay. Yeah, yeah, five to 10. So, you know, I'm going, pretty slow just because, and it would be impossible for me to create a gas embolism doing this.

Cause I think that's mainly a lot of people's concerns. Like you're, putting, air or gas and like, well, it's not air. It's a hundred percent oxygen with a small percentage of O3 gets absorbed right away.

But through that tiny needle, like you just couldn't physically couldn' do an emboli that way. Oh, very cool. I love that. What do you think about things like rectally, vaginally, auricular?

Yeah, I'll do that too. You know, in fact, for my mold patients, i will do a nasal insufflation with the ears as well and they will report like feeling like more clear-headed like right away.

Really? It brings some immediate relief and it's such a great biofilm disruptor as Well, so that's why I like it for the nasal insulation. Oh, that's great.

Do you combine it with anything? Any type of supplement? Do send them home like you're going to do ozone now that we're gonna give you A, B, or C, a peptide or whatever it could be?

Or is it just ozone only? Yeah, yeah. And again, everybody's a little bit different. It depends on how we are treating. But if it's for something like mold, I'll usually have them on a binder.

Just depends where they are. Make sure again that the detox pathways are open. That the gut is functioning well. Then we can start on the mold killing kind of stuff.

It's a great addition to the mold treatments that we have. And I will use peptides as well. But again, it's case by case. I don't have like set protocols for anything.

Okay. Well, again that's the way medicine should be so good. What are some of your favorite peptide? I'm just curious now. I use a lot of the Wolverine peptide, which is the BPC157 with the thymosin beta-500, thymosin alpha-1 for immune functioning, and sometimes the CJC with hypomerelin to stimulate growth hormone.

I've used a C-Link. I found that the C Link works really well for cognitive issues, especially if there's an anxiety component to it. That seems to do really.

There's what else? Those are kind of majority of ones. Yeah. That's good though. Okay. Cool. Are you doing like diagnostic testing as well or how are you piecing these together?

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I do a lot of stool testing. OK. Like Genova's, you know, one day collection. You get a lots of information from that. Do a a of food allergy and sensitivity testing Those are my favorites.

Yeah. And I use a lab that's looking at IgG, IgE, IGG4, and complements. So it's like four different variables for a list of about 88 different foods.

Okay. Fantastic. When you find something like a snowstorm aspect that is indicative of a leaky gut, are you using a specific protocol? In my practice, we're looking like that.

Is there a candida infestation? Then we look at potential dysbiosis, then we are looking oral BPC, maybe like to heal it. So you're kind of doing something similar?

Yeah. If there's leaky gut, I'm looking at phosphatidylcholine, some balance oil, it's the immunoglobulin, probiotics, all the good stuff. And I love oral BPC 157 as well.

great isn't it yeah yeah people realize that's where it comes from the gastric juice so it's kind of a perfect for that you know exactly no that that great one i also use a lot of low-dose naltrexone especially for my love that one yeah that and also a kpv i like all it was going to go through there And then we do something called the glyco check here, and I don't know if you've ever heard of this, but it's a test that looks at the health of your microvasculature.

So inside of all of our blood vessels, there's something call the Glycocalyx. It's like a thin gel-like matrix. held in place by tiny little hairs. And the purpose of this glycocalyx is to hold the fluid in the vessel, to protect the wall of the vessels from damage, and it houses the natural antioxidant defense mechanisms like nitric oxide, superoxide dismutase, it's all in those little hair-like structures.

So when that glycochalic gets destroyed or rubbed off because of aging, genetics, poor lifestyle, sugar, stress is a big one. Then those tiny capillaries that really depend on that glycocalyx lining for survival, like they can't work without the glyco calyx and so then you get less…

you know, tiny capillaries that are actually delivering oxygen and nutrients to the tissues. So you're getting less perfusion to tissues, to organs and so that can cause things like high blood pressure or kidney disease or brain fog.

This machine is actually a high powered video microscope on the end of a stick and it just goes under your tongue for about 5 to 10 minutes and you can actually see on a computer screen the video of these vessels under the tongue.

Because you can see the vessels under the tongue without cutting you open, just like in the back of the eye, right? And so it will do all these calculations and it'll tell you the density of your four, five, and six micron capillaries in a certain square inch or area under tongue.

And then it can actually measure that thickness of that glycocalyx. So it's really kind of amazing technology that we have this. I'm actually going to write this down right now because I even know this machine existed.

Hyperbaric Oxygen and Cellular Health

And usually I can say I am top of my game here. So you got me. Okay. All right. Very, very cool. Yeah. I will definitely share this information with you after.

Oh, please do. That's a very smart way to go about it. Now, do you have this in your office? Yes. Yeah, I have it in

my office. I've had it now for almost two years now.

So there is a supplement that you can take and it will help regrow that glycocalyx lining. When I first did my score, my scores was really low. It was like, okay, you barely got any capillaries working.

And I think it's just from chronic stress, honestly. That cortisol really does a number on the glycochalics. And so does the COVID virus, by the way, you know, when COVID hit, they had these machines in these research hospitals.

So they were able to, measure some of these patients in like the ICU versus on the ward versus just out, nobody's sick kind of a thing. Really interesting stuff.

But so there's a supplement. that's a natural product that will give your body the building blocks to regrow this glycocalyx. And so you can actually normalize blood pressure.

You can improve kidney function. you Can clear up brain fog, you know, just by being on this because you're increasing peripheral vascular blood flow.

That's super important for everything. I mean, my God. Yeah. Very cool. So what are some of the best supplements to have along with that? Did you use that with like, with synergies with anything, something like nitric oxide produce or anything like that, or?

I like the, I think it's called Vinea. It's a, yeah, that's the resveratrol. Is Pisces, right? Resverotrol, Yeah. I liked that one really well. Oh no, fantastic.

We were, we were I do resvertrol IVs here along. Well, think the polyphenol aspects of what it is and even how poly phenols came to be about medicine, i think is fascinating.

So I'm definitely going to have to nerd out and kind of put these two things together now. Thank you very much. Yeah, very cool. Very cool Cool. So yeah, so that's good.

You have the ozone aspect, which I think is fascinating. And when it comes to the hyperbaric, are you that in depth when you come to that as well? So I mean, it seems like you have your ozone built out.

Are you doing the same kind of things when I come into ozone or hyperbars? Hyperbarics, I love the Hyperbarrics. I can't say enough good things about them.

That is one of the best anti-aging tools we have here. Because once you get beyond, like, 60 hours, It does start to stimulate your stem cells. which is fantastic.

And it does such a great job of reducing inflammation, you know, healing brain tissue, heal tissue in general, normalizing the gut microbiome. Like there's just so many good things about the oxygen chamber and it's a hundred percent natural, it is just like, yeah.

So I regularly go in that and even bring my dog in with me. Lucky dog. I'm not going to lie. Well, I love this. I'm curious. We're getting to the end here.

And I always like to ask two questions. So the first one is, and again, it seems like you have all your ducks in a line here, if a healthcare practitioner, be it a nurse practitioner or a physician or whoever it could be, If they're looking to get into this functional wellness, realm, what's the best piece of advice you can give?

You've been doing this now for decades.

Advice for Practitioners and Patients

Well what do you think the biggest piece advice that you could give them to be is to kind of really be the I think just follow your curiosity and see where it leads because there are so many different little like what I like to call rabbit holes that you can go down in functional medicine.

You know, there's so much little niches that can get into like some people get in to alternative cancer care. Some people are much more into the hormones.

People are more much into peptides and regenerative medicine like there is just a variety of different things that we can do and so it's just You just have to follow what seems to call to you, I guess.

Oh, okay. Cool. I like that. That's the first time I've gotten that answer, which I actually think is probably one of my favorites. Very, very cool. The second one is if you're a patient now, so you are a person who's been in the whole traditional rat race and you have chronic disease or you just looking to kind of improve who you as a personal in general and become your best self.

What's something that you should look for in a practitioner when you're walking over to across the aisle to make sure that You're not only getting the best care possible, but you know the setting yourself up to be the version of yourself Yeah.

So I would say look for, you know, just ask them, how long have you been in the functional medicine space? What is your background in this? And do you have any patients that can give testimonials to, yeah.

I always say word of mouth, that's the best, best advertising out there. You know what I mean? Yeah, for sure. Sure. Oh, well, good. I got to say the ozone, the hyperbarics, this has really touched my heart because those are everything that we offer here.

So it's been a spirited discussion today, Dr. Ward. If anybody's looking to get a hold of you, see some more of what you're putting out, what's the best way to actually get hold Yeah.

So my website is drjuliaward.com and our office phone number is 281-710-3380. I always like having a phone. Number I'm very old school in that way. Old school.

Do you ever think like 10 years ago, be like, Oh, your phone numbers are old-school. You know what I mean? Like, oh, like. Well, it's been super, super fun, Dr.

Ward. I'm not gonna lie. Again, this is the Lifestyle Medicine Podcast. We're powered by Access Medical Lab. You can find this podcast on Apple, YouTube, Spotify, pretty much anywhere you see podcasts, you can this here.

And again, Doctor Julia Ward, It has been an absolute delight having you on. Thank you so much for stopping by. Thank you so much. I really enjoyed it.

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