Why Naturopathic Medicine Needs A Place In Your Cardiovascular Care Transcript

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Women and Heart Disease

Hello everyone. Welcome back to another episode of the Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention Summit, where we bring in the best guests, the authorities, on how to actually prevent a heart attack or stroke.

And with that, I've got our doctor at Natural Heart Doctor, our lead naturopathic physician, Doctor Lauren Lufthansa. Hello. Thank you for having me on here today.

So glad. All right. So it's wonderful to talk to you. And you've been with us a natural heart doctor for years. And one of the things that I think is so important to really is the story of women and cardiovascular disease.

So as you've dealt with a lot of male patients and female patients, you know, over the years, what do you see are the kind of main things? Why why are women suffering?

Why are they struggling? Why are women in particular having heart attacks and strokes? I think we're really missing the mark on women in cardiology, because a lot of the risk factors and the symptoms that women experience are underdiagnosed and maybe the chest pain, the crushing chest pain that men experience and look for in assuming, oh, I'm going to have a heart attack, that's not really what women experience.

So women might be experiencing some palpitations or maybe even some dizziness, and they just think, oh, I kind of get this vertigo every now and then, maybe a little bit of abdominal pain or what feels like it's maybe in their lungs.

So it's not exactly as cut and dry and straight forward as we expect. So that oftentimes when these women present to their physician, their cardiologist, it maybe gets underrepresented and kind of just washed away as, oh, you know, it's probably just signs of aging.

It's just normal. So we're kind of doing away with the signs and symptoms that our body is telling us. And so therefore these women are left with being undertreated ultimately.

Sometimes I feel like women also, they kind of put their spouse first, like they take care of their husband, they do all these things and the women, therefore they're maybe they're not sleeping as well.

Maybe they're not eating as well. They're not taking that those moments for self-care. So how would you advise those women in those situations? Yes. We still want you to take care of us men.

Yes, we definitely need help there. But, you know, how do we tell these women like it really is? It's kind of like when the oxygen mask drops on the plane, like you put the mask on yourself first, right?

And then you take care of others. How do women take care of themselves. Exactly? The the woman is usually the primary care taker, the one that's worried about.

Okay, I got to get food on the table. I gotta make sure that so-and-so has breakfast on the table when they wake up, so their sleep is cut short. They're a little bit more stressed.

There may be eating a little bit more improperly than they should. And so they they're kind of just things are getting, you know, hindered from all angles for women.

They're and they're just kind of sleeping in under the road.

Naturopathic Training and Career Path

So I think that if you just really address, you know, the foundational principles of health eating well, living well, thinking well, like we do here at Natural Heart Doctor, we, you know, prioritize the diet.

So yes, you can cook for your entire family, but eating nutritional foods, for yourself as well, prioritizing your sleep, your stress management, and just looking for all of these foundational components of health so that you don't have to kind of ignore the signs and symptoms.

Maybe you don't have to have any signs and symptoms because you've got a really solid foundation of health. I like that, and I think, you know, kind of, you know, knowing you and your family like you're a perfect example.

I mean, you're, still young enough that you're not getting into that significant risk category. Although we do see plenty of young people with cardiac events and cardiac problems.

But I think if you, you know, as a young mother, and as a wife and then, of course, you've got, you know, your parents as well. And then, of course, a whole slew of patients who love and adore you.

There's a lot of things on your particular plate. And this is not to upset you. And say, wow. Yeah. It's true. I'm not saying go because, I mean, because I know that you're smart enough that you do eat the right foods.

I know you're very active and all those things are critical. And then also to highlight a little bit of your back story again, you are a natural medical doctor.

You went through four years of education and dramatic education at the, former Southwest College of Natural Medicine, which is now an Open university.

Tell us, how did you get into naturopathic medicine? How did you go down that route versus going down the medical route? So I, I always knew I kind of work into the health space.

But after I graduated with my undergraduate degree in physiology, I was like, let me just pause here because I don't think that I want to be signing off on antibiotics and statins all day.

So I kind of took some time, and I actually want to be working with a brilliant, chiropractor who you and I both know. And so he was the one that was like, hey, there's this excellent college down the street.

This, you know, that can offer you a degree in naturopathic medicine. Through him is where he actually put the bug in my ear about how awesome doctor Jack Wilson was.

So going through my merry way of my four year degree of natural path medicine, I kind of had this ultimate end goal and push. And that's already, that's already, what, three years ago, four years ago, three years ago, four years ago. Four years ago now. Yeah.

And when I called up the head of the, naturopathic school and I said, I'm looking for somebody at Natural Heart doctor, he's like, I got the perfect candidate.

She's brilliant. She's, very, personable. And I think he'll, you know, she'll be great with patients and communicating very well. It also, you know, you were the president of the class, you know, so, you know, very highly esteemed when you joined us.

Then again, that's just it's so exciting that you're here, the when you're working, with women, maybe. Who? And again, I don't mean to single out the women here, but let's just kind of give.

A lot of times we don't focus enough on the women, and women are not focused on on the studies. Right. When people talk about evidence based medicine and they're like, oh, well, we got this data on statins and aspirin, you know, and different procedures.

And most of the studies are really geared towards men, right. Really very underrepresented. Absolutely. So I don't think that the studies are adequate.

I think that they're biased to begin with, but then we're underrepresented in terms of that population as a whole.

Holistic Cardiac Assessment

We've got a whole completely different set of hormone priorities that shift, you know, monthly. But then shift as we age. And that cardioprotective estrogen just decreases.

We get shifts in cholesterol. So then suddenly these postmenopausal women are getting put on statins, you know, right out the gate just because their estrogen drops.

So the cholesterol goes up, which you're doing yourself a giant disservice by getting on this statin drug, decreasing the cholesterol when you've already lost some of that cardioprotective nature of the estrogen.

So we're underrepresented in the studies. These studies are not elaborating on the hormonal and lifestyle differences and the women as a whole. And, you know, kind of back to what we were discussing about before, you know, diet and lifestyle and everything with these women.

It's not easy. So I think that that's where holistic functional health is so important for these women. And we have to kind of be coaching to understand that moving forward so that we don't get put into this same conventional setup of destruction.

Yeah. Whenever people talk about the evidence based medicine and we can debate that all day long. But it's one thing that's not debatable is that women are underrepresented, especially in a lot of that stat and data, interventional data.

Bypass surgery data, all that stuff. So somebody comes to see you, male or female, and let's say they're coming in with, you know, heart attack. They're looking for heart attack prevention.

Maybe they're concerned because there's a family history. Maybe they've got palpitations, hips, flip flops, maybe their blood pressure is high. Maybe they've been told they've got high cholesterol and are on a statin drug.

How are you approaching people? Kind of right from the first visit just right into the conversation. Where are you going from there? So I kind. Of want to see where they're at.

Is their diet and lifestyle dialed in, or are they already kind of like minded? Are they already ahead of the game? You know, do they source their own food so they cook their meals at home?

Do they, exercise so they get out in the sunshine. So kind of where are we at to begin with? Because that we can't, you know, out supplement a poor lifestyle diet.

So getting a good understanding about where people are at. But then really we want to kind of take a peek under the hood, see what's going on. So we do some really good in-depth lab assessment and see is there a significant inflammation.

What's the oxidative stress? We figure out a lot of the what. And then furthermore the why. Why is there a significant stress inflammation oxidative stress.

And how can we modify that from diet lifestyle supplements. The environment. So a lot of different components of that. We can take this person holistically, and kind of assess them as a whole.

And make sure that what we're doing works for them. And, you know, we talk a lot about nutrition. There's all there's, you know, different debate about what's the best diet to follow.

I think you and I are both in agreement that maybe the first thing to do is make sure that it's all organic, like, let's get the chemicals out of the food.

There's a lot of conversation these days about seed oils and and avoiding seed oils. But my usual take on that is, is that people yes, they're consuming seed oils, but they're not consuming enough of the healthy animal fats or the whole food fats that you would find in avocados and coconuts and even eating olives.

So it's almost like they have this imbalance where they're not getting enough of the good stuff. Therefore, some of the potential bad stuff. Yeah, it's it's really this, you know, right ratio.

I would argue to that if you're eating a lot of processed foods, you're getting a lot of seed oils. Cut back the processed foods. And I don't really know anybody that's I mean they're out there, I'm sure I don't know anybody that's cooking at home with canola oil and sunflower seed oil in their home.

So if you're preparing a meal, cook with butter, cook with olive oil, cook with avocado oil. So something that's natural and you're getting that good fat, so that you're taking if it's got a barcode, it's probably not going to serve you in any way.

Diet, Gluten, and Seed Oils

I mean, don't you think there's bigger, fish to fry, if you will, and healthy fats. Where are you going? To fry them. But, then then just the whole seed oil debate, right?

I mean, there's, like, so many other things that are going on. There's plastics and chemicals, you know, and environmental toxins and, all these other pesticides and GMOs.

There's so many different things that we can focus on that organic sunflower seed oil is probably not the biggest offender in the story. Absolutely. I think first and foremost, getting on an organic and gluten free diet, because otherwise you're eating something that's heavily sprayed and herbicides and pesticides that are aimed at killing a living organism, which we happen to be, and we're full of trillions of them.

So we're killing off our gut microbiome just from we're killing ourselves from the inside out. If we're not choosing to eat an organic diet. You mentioned gluten free.

And when I first started the holistic practice, you know, here in 2012 and for several years before that, as I was making that move out of conventional medicine, I avoided gluten 100%.

And there's no reason to eat gluten. I don't think there's any like, health benefits in particular to wheat, barley and rye. But do you find that there are people who can tolerate it?

And especially when we go organic or a lot of people say, well, you know, I eat organic sour dough, which may be lower on the gluten side, kind of where where are you giving people some, some leeway here?

Yes, I believe that a lot of I mean, there's individual differences. So different sensitivities, the the health of the gut going into consuming said food is I think, the initial risk factor.

So what's your gut integrity like. If you've got a good intact gut lining then you might be a little bit more resilient and having some wheat or some gluten containing food.

But ultimately, if you're going to be eating wheat, I always suggest if you're going to get it somewhere outside of the US, because we've really screwed up the wheat plant in the US, and it's very heavily sprayed here.

So some organic, imported Italian, maybe something like that so that you're getting a lesser evil. But I think some people can tolerate it. Some of the like einkorn, some of these ancient type grains that are less modified are typically going to be the best bet.

But ultimately, I find that even if patients come in, they say, oh, I don't have any issues with gluten, but we get them off of it. They find, you know what? I eat these bumps on my arm.

I don't have them anymore. I used to get some psoriasis I use, so ultimately I've found over the years that people can tolerate it, but they do quite a bit better without it.

Okay. And I appreciate you throwing out the Italian comment there because your nationality, your heritage is Italian. So, chalk one up for the great, people of Italy and, the Roman Empire.

So, when, when you see people and they kind of they're coming in to see us in you through a cardiac kind of lens. But how often do you find, like, everything gets better in that person, right? It gets better.

Like you said, skin conditions get better. How how how rewarding is that? How are people feeling when they go through that process with you? It's awesome because the first appointment I ask them a million questions and they're sitting there. Why am I talking to?

I'm talking about my heart. Why am I talking about my bowel movements and my skin and my hair and my energy levels? I mean, I'm here because I'm having palpitations or I'm just, you know, assessing my risk factor.

We'll come full circle once we put the wheels in motion and we put the plan into action, then they're like, you know what? My energy is better than it's been in years.

I didn't realize I had a skin issue until it was gone. I didn't realize that I had digestive upset until I realized I, you know, no longer went to bed with heartburn.

And so, again, the holistic space is where we are treating the whole person. And only in conventional medicine is it you go to the cardiologist and you only address the heart.

So in holistic functional medicine we find that we get an improvement and it's very rewarding. I had a guy just last week and he was like, I feel like I'm in my 20s again.

And he's like, I really didn't expect that. So I think that expecting the unexpected is something that is really cool. Yeah, no, for sure. And you know, when you guys are going through your naturopathic medical, training, are you making fun of the medical doctors?

In that sense of how we do silo everything into, like, this person has a heart problem. This person has a kidney problem. Isn't it a total body problem that people have?

It's it's pretty wild that. Yes. I mean, the cardiologist will say, oh, you have to go see your endocrinologist when the thyroid is what's causing the palpitations.

Stress, Exercise, and Functional Movement

And so it's like, if we could just, you know, be a little bit more comprehensive in this approach and understanding that it's all connected and it's not just, you know, what's all inside, but what's in your outside environment too.

So you're this whole biosphere of space, and we have to take care of all of it. As it relates to, heart attack and stroke prevention. Outside of the nutrition story, what is your what are your favorite, like tips that you're telling people who want to prevent a heart attack?

Like what are lifestyle things that people can do? Mental wellness and stuff like that. Emotional wellness. We often talk about, one of the number one causes of heart attacks in premenopausal women is spontaneous coronary artery dissection.

We've got toca sumo cardiomyopathy, which is the broken heart syndrome. Where does the lifestyle and that

healthy mindset play in? So not ignoring your or stress level because we cannot control the stressors, right.

That's just kind of what we're going to be bombarded with. That's our life. That's our relationship. So we can't always control the stressors, but we can work on what our response to that is.

So we can try to mitigate the stress effect on our body. Because what happens? Your heart starts racing, your blood pressure goes up. So we have these normal physiologic responses.

But if we can check in and say, okay, well I'm not going to have the shallow breathing and the rapid heart rate, you take a couple deep breaths. You tell yourself, I'm not running from this prehistoric tiger, I am okay, I am safe, I am well.

So, you know, I tell patients all the time, it sounds a little bit woowoo, but check in, tell yourself. Look in the mirror. I'm okay. I'm healthy. I'm well.

Take a couple deep breaths. You know, step away from that. The difficult discussion. Step away from, you know, whatever. You're sitting in traffic, you're you're okay.

So checking in with yourself I think is really important because so often again, we just sweep these things under the rug and it's, you know, our mind is yeah, it has a lot of control over our body.

So we have to just get back in the driver's seat. I know you're very active. I know you're very active running after your son at this moment. But historically, you've been a very, you know, huge outdoor person, hiking, biking, just physical activity outdoors.

Tell us what that, like, you know, what's that like? And then how important that is to you. And then again, how you, teach patients to follow the same thing.

So I used to be really big into hit, but I find that actually that maybe a little bit too much of a stressor. So those kind of acute stressors, if we already if our body already thinks that we're running from something, running from our life, maybe something that's a little bit less, you know, acute stressor.

So again, going for a hike, getting outside in the sunshine, whatever you're going to do, if you can do it outside in the sunshine, even better. Lifting weights resistance training is huge.

We talk about cholesterol and blood sugar management and metabolism, and having more muscles on your bones is improving all of these things. Again, women, bone, mineral density.

Your muscles are pulling on your bones, so pick up heavy things. So I think that that is really a core of that to your resistance training outside go.

If you're going to go for a walk, walk up the hill. If you're going to go for a bike ride, bike up a hill. So encouraging. Yes, that cardio activity. But even better yet, doubling down by resistance training and getting that done outside.

And that's a great. And sometimes I think too, is that even if there is evidence that high intensity interval training is beneficial, how many people are really going to get out there and just, you know, do sets of sprints and especially as people get older, maybe they've got some orthopedic challenges.

I think the most important thing too is just getting outside and having fun, you know? Yeah, we're out here in Arizona. You hike up Camelback Mountain wherever you live, just getting outside.

The more time you spend outside, the longer you live. So that's all excellent information. I was actually interviewing someone recently, and she was telling me with her clients that she talks about physical activity, but there's nothing that they like to do.

Like they don't like to hike or they don't like to play tennis. So what she does is a technique of throwing back to childhood. When you were a child and you were in physical education class, what's the one game that you like to play?

And then she started telling me, she said, she said, kickball and she had this person go get one of those old time red rubber balls and go kick the ball.

Dodge ball. I think, dodge ball is more of a two person favorite. So you can play does what about yourself? Yes, but keeping it functional, right. So keep it, like you said, chasing around kids.

I've got to be able to bend down and pick things up. So can you do those things into advanced years? Can you bend over, pick up something heavy without throwing your back out, keeping your core strength intact, going up stairs without having to, you know, use something to pull you up, keeping your quads and your hamstrings intact.

Advanced Testing and Personalized Supplements

So keeping you functional into advanced years. And I think that some kickball is a great addition to that. I like it when, when we talk about some of the most advanced testing in the world, you know, you guys learned all this stuff in naturopathy, medical school for myself, I had to learn it, you know, many years, of course, after many years on the job, what are some of your favorite tests that we're going through right now in order to really give people that idea of this is the best way to prevent a heart attack and stroke, and we can actually make these measurements and come up with a real metrics of how people are doing. Right.

So I love our toxin testing because it is a urine test. So I explain this to patients and that your kidneys are having to pull these toxins out of your bloodstream.

So this is circulating your 60,000 miles of blood vessels. And it's there. Fear going to aggravate all of those blood vessels. And so we have to identify what's in circulation and what amount is it in so that we can, optimize the risk factors.

Also, I love looking at the intestinal permeability panel because it's your body's barrier system being hindered. Again, what is being allowed into circulation if those proteins is intact and are not, they're holding together their gut cells.

Then they're going to be allowing bacteria, food particles, you name it, into that circulation. And then all those same factors, right. The the lining of the intestines is also the same as the lining of the blood vessel, the endothelial lining.

So as that becomes leaky like this leaky heart syndrome that we talk about very often, how these things leak into the blood vessels, setting up inflammation, oxidative stress, immune activation, and then plaque formation, heart attack, stroke and then being dead.

And and it's just unfortunate that the medical doctors, some of the most intelligent people, you know, Harvard graduates like this not with their getting their education and they're just inundated.

Even in this 2025 United States education around the world, controlled by pharmaceutical companies. You know, that's what's that's what's happening there, you know.

Very tunnel vision. And that's what they receive, their training and and so that's, you know, what? They put the weight on. But we have to acknowledge all of these other facts that are absolutely adding up to detrimental factors for our health.

All right. So we go through the 100 year heart method that we developed. And we do the eat well, live well, think well, test don't ask. And now we come into the category of evidence based supplements.

What are some of your favorite evidence based supplements as you deal with people on a daily basis? So I always work to improve kind of the metabolic factors decrease oxidative stress.

So there's a lot of good antioxidant support. But really, you know, because of the test, don't guess it's a matter of what's deficient, what needs addressing here.

So it's not just, you know, throwing mud at a wall and seeing what sticks. It's a matter of, hey, your body's deficient in magnesium. Potassium. That's why you're having these palpitations.

Your body is deficient and antioxidants, which is why you have such significant oxidative stress because of your environment. So it's really so fine tuned that I've got my favorite supplements and but it's really a matter of what does that person need.

And then that's where we see the most benefit from it. So and what is the benefit then of working like you're working with a physician like yourself in order to get that guidance.

Why can't I just read a blog or go to, you know, ChatGPT or AI and ask a question and say, you know, you know, what should I take? Why should people go for that individual attention, whether it's with you or me or or any other health care practitioner?

Well, you know, there's a lot of good stuff. I mean, we carry some of the best supplements in the world that are third party tests and really high quality things.

But we don't just want to take one of everything. So we need to see exactly what is indicated for you. And I think that that requires physician assistance.

Is is it going to interfere with any of the medications you're on? Can we work to get you off of some of the medications by implementing some of the supplement strategies?

So I think that there's a lot to be said for working with the physician and keeping that list concise, because I don't want any of my patients taking 30 capsules three times a day.

That's not fun for you. That's not fun for me. So I would rather, you know, bulk up on the nutrition lifestyle and then use supplements as needed and only as indicated by labs.

And what about when women, maybe come to you looking for hormones? Maybe they're on hormones. How do we safely use hormones? Not only for women, but also for men.

Men who are on, testosterone. How do we make it safe? So I'm big on keeping everything in a physiologic dose. I don't need a 65 year old woman at a post, or a premenopausal 2020 year old level of estrogen.

So we don't need to strive for that.

Hormones and Acupuncture

We don't need to shoot for the moon. We keep it at a normal physiologic dose. So we have the cardioprotective factors. We have the protective factors for your bone mineral density.

So there is a lot that can be done with just a little. And so if this patient is symptomatic because of low estrogen or low testosterone or low progesterone.

So they're feeling anxious just a little bit can actually gain a lot of headway in symptom improvement. It doesn't need to be just sitting in a box on labs.

So it doesn't matter about black and white about how that individual feels. All right. Now you also have training in

acupuncture. I know it's something you enjoy doing.

I know a lot of people. You've, you know, done well with that. Where does acupuncture fit in? Maybe on a preventive basis. Is acupuncture part of the prevention of heart attacks and strokes?

I think it's really great adjunctive care because it's innately addressing the whole system. So acupuncture, traditional traditional Chinese medicine as a whole, looks at how this organ interplays with this and how this interplays with this.

So it's really this whole big connective web of your organ systems and you as a whole. So it's great adjunctive care to holistic medicine, because if you are sleepless and you are feeling rapid heart rate and it can really tie together, okay, how can I improve my, you know, the traditional Chinese medicine approach to cardiac care and getting better sleep as a result of that.

So it's very interesting and and an adjunct. Well, and I think also that we're, we're really just starting to appreciate and gain a level of understanding of how these mechanisms work, how we understand that we are all energy.

And there is this concept of energy medicine and kind of I think that acupuncture, correct me if I'm wrong. It's like tapping in to those energy fields of the body as well.

And I believe as more time goes on and more research, not that we need that, because sometimes people just like I'm under, chiropractic care, I'm under acupuncture, and I just feel better.

So I don't need your science. But it appears that more and more literature is coming out on these actual benefits. Well, it's been around for thousands of years, and people have been reaping the benefits of acupuncture for thousands of years.

So I think that science may, you know, kind of pull more people into it. It becomes more mainstream. I feel like some people sit, well, better with that.

But ultimately we find that, you know, because, yes, you are tapping into the life force, that there's blockages. There is, you know, free flowing. It's there's stagnancy.

And so it's a really interesting way to kind of, tie it all together, keep things moving, and improve your life, force your chi. All right. So I will, give you the final last word, on this interview.

Anything you would like to add? That may be, beneficial for anyone who's listening.

Final Advice on Holistic Care

You know, I think that there's a lot of viewers maybe, that are already doing their homework, and they're well versed in the holistic side of things, and they know that maybe there's something else to explore rather than just conventional medicine and a pill for every ill.

But if you're not already speaking with a holistic or functional or naturopathic provider, I would encourage you to take that leap, because you can, you know, Doctor Google, there's something to be said for that.

You're the one living with the symptoms. You're the one living with it day to day. And so you can do a lot of really good research. But there are so many voices out there and they'll ultimately wind up being conflicting.

So find somebody that aligns with you and speak with them and work with them. You know, great, great advice. So thank you so much, Doctor Lauren Lufthansa, we appreciate you being here for this episode inside of the Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention Summit.

From everyone who we've interviewed so far and Doctor Matanza and everyone over here at Natural Heart. Doctor,

thank you so much for listening. We'll be back with another fantastic guest.

See you soon.