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‘Treating the patient, not just the disease’: reading ancient medicine in modern holistic medicine

Helen King

In this chapter I want to extend our reflection on a central theme of this book: namely, models of disease which go beyond localising it in an organ, or a set of organs. In what forms part of a larger project on how Hippocrates is used in contemporary medicine and beyond, I shall consider various approaches which operate under the umbrella of ‘holistic medicine’ today and outline their reception of Hippocratic medicine.¹ I shall then locate some of the claims made, in relation to the texts of the ancient Mediterranean world and to the earlier history of holism. This means addressing the value and the shortcomings of some of the basic models we apply to the history of medicine, and particularly the models used by those who claim to be practising ‘holistic’ medicine today. What do they mean by ‘the whole’, and how do they enlist ancient sources in support of their arguments?

I find useful here the model of ‘projection’. Thomas Rütten has pointed out that any biography of Hippocrates, including those created or repeated today, is a way to “give concrete form to the concerns of professional politics and religion, to theoretical concepts, and to ethical-moral claims”, so that Hippocrates becomes “the projection screen for all the medicinal utopias that since the Roman Republic have taken him and his writings in tow”.² This recalls James Davidson’s comments on ancient Greek sexuality, when he challenged the modern view that it was all about who was penetrated and who did the penetration: “The Greeks did not award points for penetration ... they certainly did not structure the whole of society let alone the entire world according to a coital schema. The whole theory is simply a projection of our own gender nightmares on to the screen of a very different culture.”³ How does the holistic Hippocrates fit into this practice of projecting utopias or nightmares? Whose Hippocrates is he: does he belong to orthodox medicine or to alternatives to this? What versions of holism are currently being projected back on to the classical past, what does this tell us about current views of what medicine should be, and how are the classical texts used to reinforce what their users mean by holism? In this chapter I shall be examining these questions mostly through that key figure of Hippocrates, the screen upon whom western medical systems have long projected their various visions.

In this volume, Peter Singer has identified three possible meanings of holism in Galen and his near-contemporaries: one focused on the relationship between mind (or soul) and body, another considering the body as a whole, and the third concerned with the body’s unity with the cosmos; this last meaning was the one chosen by Paul Carton, one of the French naturopaths who promoted what he considered Hippocratic holism in the 1920s as part of a return to

¹ King (2019).

² Rütten (2010) 439.

³ Davidson (1997) 176.

simplicity as an “antique virtue”.⁴ Singer has demonstrated how Galen emphasises the importance of correctly identifying the “affected part” (Lat. *locus affectus*), but also provides evidence that the Methodist approach to medicine rejected any interest in parts on the basis that, even if one part of the body suffered more badly than others, this would have no effect on the mode of treatment, since this was aimed at the body as a whole.⁵ Hynek Bartoš has offered a different three meanings in the context of the Hippocratic treatise *On Regimen*: one involving treating all parts together with the whole; another concentrating on the influence of the environment on the body; and a third considering the body as mimicking the tripartite structure of the cosmos.⁶

Modern holistic medical approaches, rarely constrained by any of these meanings, tend towards the larger, ‘cosmic’ interpretations. Often combined with using the name of Hippocrates, they promote better ways not only to treat illness, but also to live. For example, when we read on a website advertising the Apivita cosmetics range that its founders were inspired by “the holistic approach of Hippocrates to health, beauty and well-being” and that this approach influences their “make-up, fragrances, soaps, hair products and sunscreen, all of their unique products are designed to act beneficial [sic] to the body, spirit and soul”,⁷ the word ‘holistic’ is being used in a deliberately imprecise way; what is most important is, firstly, that whatever it means it is supposed to be a Good Thing and, secondly, that its credibility is somehow enhanced here by its attribution to Hippocrates.⁸

Why Hippocrates? In her chapter, Brooke Holmes has raised the question of what is at stake in going back to the ancients, asking whether ‘ancient’ is seen as a marker of value, or of irrelevance.⁹ In the case of the invocation of the holy name of Hippocrates, the message is almost always one of value: tracing the lineage of a treatment or approach back to Hippocrates is usually a winning move in a power game. Writing about medicine in the United States in the period before the Civil War, John Harley Warner described a key benefit of invoking Hippocrates as being that “At a time when a multitude of irregular healers were competing successfully for recognition and clients, recounting an historical story that displayed two millennia of enduring tradition was a tool that orthodox physicians could use to set themselves apart.”¹⁰ New is bad: traditional, having a history, is good. As that example from contemporary cosmetics advertising shows, however, Hippocrates, ‘Father of Medicine’ – although that was

⁴ Weisz (2002) 264.

⁵ *De sectis* 7, 1.86-7 K; Singer, this vol.

⁶ Bartoš, this vol.

⁷ <https://greekcitytimes.com/2018/07/22/greeces-leading-natural-cosmetics-brand-taking-the-world-by-storm/>; unless otherwise stated, all websites accessed 25 March 2020.

⁸ Sellars and Yeatman (1930), *1066 And All That*, used the capitalized phrase “A Good Thing” to describe historical events which are universally accepted in schoolbook history as having had a net positive effect. So, for example, the signing of the Magna Carta was A Good Thing.

⁹ Holmes, this vol.

¹⁰ Warner (2002) 201-2.

not one of his earliest titles – is not the sole preserve of either mainstream or orthodox medicine.¹¹

Hippocrates in contemporary holistic medicine

In looking at how ancient Greek medicine features in holism today, the website ‘Greek Medicine’ is a good place to start, not least because it is so widely used by other online materials, whether or not they credit it as their source.¹² It is run by David K. Osborn, who describes himself as “Master Herbalist - Astrologer - Holistic Health Consultant and Educator” and who explained its genesis as “a website about traditional, holistic, Greek Medicine”; note the capitals here, and those two very powerful adjectives.¹³ He is also a trained acupuncture practitioner and certified yoga instructor. Holism, in terms of its current practitioners, often involves one person using a range of methods, making the contrast to specialism, where one person is an expert on a very narrow field. Healers project their range of healing methods back in time so that the sanctuary of Asklepios in Cos becomes “a holistic healing centre” which “contained infirmaries, temples, hot springs, hostels, a school for physicians and much more”;¹⁴ taken from a Greek tourism website, this wording picks up and gives a ‘holistic’ spin to an older scholarly view that healing sanctuaries were much like modern health spas frequented by “health tourists”.¹⁵

Osborn’s online bio describes how his life changed when he found a book which

correlated the astrological signs and planets with the four temperaments and humors of Greek Medicine. This gave David the Golden Key to medical astrology; he was then able to relate everything he had learned and studied in holistic healing to astrology. This key to medical astrology also started David’s study of Greek Medicine.¹⁶

His basic approach is that “Truth is one, but the sages of these different traditional medical systems call it by different names.” Holism, then, is broader than anything we have so far encountered: for him, it concerns a single medical truth which connects all forms of medicine. Greek medicine is “truly a natural healing system for the whole world” and is “the traditional healing system from which modern medicine grew and evolved”.¹⁷ One truth: whole world. Here, holism is about more than treating the body as a whole: it’s about treating medicine as a

¹¹ King (2002).

¹² http://www.greekmedicine.net/whos_who/Hippocrates.html.

¹³ <http://www.greekmedicine.net/blog/events/celebrating-ten-great-years.html>.

¹⁴ <http://www.discovergreece.com/en/greek-islands/dodecanese/kos/hippocrates-asclepeion-a-holistic-healing-centre> accessed 10 September 2018; with a fine disregard for chronology the current version of the site, <https://www.discovergreece.com/experiences/feel-healing-energy-asclepion-kos>, presents the temple as built to “further the teachings of the father of medicine, Hippocrates” and as promoting “a holistic approach to wellbeing”.

¹⁵ Graf (1992) 199; Israelowich (2015) 111.

¹⁶ http://www.greekmedicine.net/whos_who/Hippocrates.html.

¹⁷ <http://www.greekmedicine.net/blog/events/celebrating-ten-great-years.html>.

whole, with different local models expressing the same truth, and being the ancestors of ‘modern medicine’. In his history of naturopathy, Whorton called this trend “world medicine”.¹⁸

While there is no reason why users of the site would necessarily read Osborn’s bio, he also writes a blog, on which in March 2017 he celebrated ten years of the greekmedicine.net site.¹⁹ In the same blog post, he explained that the book which gave him that Golden Key was *L’Astrologie Médicale* by Sylvie Chermet-Carroy, an astrologer and graphologist.²⁰ This is an example of how the greekmedicine.net site adds to its image of authority by Osborn’s practice of giving ‘acknowledgements’ of some of the books he has used, a common internet strategy which plays into a model in which books must surely be (even) better than online materials. Robson and Baek’s *Engines of Hippocrates* similarly notes how many ‘Hippocratic’ quotes there are online but alludes to “following the scholarly tradition of reporting back to published, print-on-paper sources”, which means we need to find these quotes in a *book* before using them.²¹ This strategy often backfires, however, as books and articles in print may take seriously something thoroughly untrustworthy which originated on the internet.²²

On the greekmedicine.net site, Osborn does not use the standard printed works we would perhaps expect; those deriving from scholarship on ancient medicine. What is his position on Hippocrates and his works? He considers that we can be “fairly certain” that some of the works of the corpus can be attributed to him; specifically, *Airs, Waters, Places, Aphorisms* and *Ancient Medicine*. He writes that Hippocrates led a “band of renegade physicians” who moved with him from Cnidos to Cos. His source here is acknowledged as another printed work, Ghulam Chishti, *The Traditional Healer’s Handbook: A Classic Guide to the Medicine of Avicenna*.²³

That “band of renegade physicians” phrase is repeated widely; greekmedicine.net was cited in 2009 by a chiropractic blog using it.²⁴ Not just the “band of renegade physicians” sentence, but the entire section of greekmedicine.net in which it appears, was copied with attribution by Jim Putnam in his blog *The Colton Points Times*, 31 January 2017, as part of a piece on the Hippocratic Oath.²⁵ The phrase also features extensively without attribution; for example, on a site selling nutritionals, *Tested Nutrients*, which proudly proclaims “We are people in search

¹⁸ This “strives to embody the healing wisdom and techniques of all civilizations from antiquity onward and to overcome the spiritual poverty of the biomedical model of disease”; Whorton (2002) 305.

¹⁹ <http://www.greekmedicine.net/blog/events/celebrating-ten-great-years.html>.

²⁰ Chermet-Carroy (1998).

²¹ Robson and Baek (2009) 57. NB this is not the most reliable of sources; for example, it has ‘Celsus’ for Celsus.

²² See King (2020) for the internet origin, and print afterlife, of the story of Hippocrates’ jail sentence.

²³ Chishti (1988) 11.

²⁴ <http://doctorscrubs.blogspot.co.uk/2009/04/hatred-of-tmb-and-tma-against.html>.

²⁵ <https://coltonpointtimes.blogspot.co.uk/2017/01/>.

of science”.²⁶ It features in supposedly academic publications, including those “published, print-on-paper sources”.²⁷ A “band of renegade physicians” sounds almost like Robin Hood (“riding through the glen/... with his band of men”), and immediately identifies Hippocratic medicine with the forces of the Resistance; Hippocrates himself can become “The medical renegade who came to be called the Father of Medicine”.²⁸ The resistance story has other internet variations, most notably the myth that he was imprisoned for “opposing the infrastructure” of ancient Greece, on which I have published elsewhere.²⁹

In Chishti’s and Osborn’s narrative, holism is used to account for the alleged move from Cnidos to Cos. Both say that Cnidian medicine “considered the body to be merely a collection of isolated parts, and saw diseases manifesting in a particular organ or body part as affecting that part only, which alone was treated”. So, a focus on an organ or part is seen as wrong.

This part of the Osborn/Chishti model is repeated on the website of Red House Australia, an independent centre for the treatment of eating disorders majoring on superfoods eaten in a community environment, where it appears on a page on “Hippocrates’ Influence on Red House Philosophies, Principles, and Practices”.³⁰ The Osborn/Chishti idea that “The Cnidian school considered the body to be merely a collection of isolated parts” is quoted, alongside what was then the opening of the Biography section of the Hippocrates page on Wikipedia:

Historians agree that Hippocrates was born around the year 460 BC on the Greek island of Kos. He is renowned as the “Father of Modern Medicine” – in recognition of his lasting contributions to the field as the founder of the Hippocratic School of Medicine. It was Hippocrates who finally freed medicine from the shackles of magic, superstition, and the supernatural.³¹

Use of the Wikipedia line “Hippocratic medicine was humble and passive” (still showing on the page in March 2020) also betrays the origins of this Red House page. While I have not yet been able to work out the origin of this widely-repeated line – it could simply be the creation of a Wikipedia editor – it proves a particularly useful marker for reliance on what holistic practitioners often wrongly call the “wonderful Hippocrates wikipedia page”, which was created in May 2001 and currently running at a daily average of over 1700 hits.³² One

²⁶ <https://www.testednutrients.com/en/story/>; also in the author’s response to a comment on <http://jamesmalloy.blogspot.co.uk/2013/07/nietzscheaphorism-120-gay-science.html>.

²⁷ Much of the page of greekmedicine.net is copied without attribution in Cacciafoco (2012) 20-2 where, bizarrely, the words ‘band’ and ‘renegade physicians’ are marked by quotation marks when the rest of the plagiarised text is not.

²⁸ <http://www.unani.com/hipporcates.htm>.

²⁹ King (2020).

³⁰ <http://www.redhouseaustralia.org/hippocrates>, which also claims that the philosophy owes something to “Louis Pasture”.

³¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocrates>.

³² Acknowledged as the source for the ‘humble and passive’ on <http://www.isabellehutton.com/Hippocrates.FatherOfMedicine.html> (domain now expired). For the statistics on the page, see <https://xtools.wmflabs.org/articleinfo/en.wikipedia.org/Hippocrates> and

indication of just how widely used the Wikipedia Hippocrates page is comes in Ian Learmonth's ("MBChB(Stell), FRCS, FRCS(Ed), FCS(SA)Orth, Professor Emeritus") opening address to the European Hip Society Meeting in 2010 which began with "Hippocratic medicine was humble and passive. Treatment was gentle, kind to the patient, and emphasised the importance of keeping the patient clean and sterile."³³ Every word there is taken straight from the Wikipedia Hippocrates page.

For Chishti and Osborn, holism thus characterises Cos and marks its superiority over Cnidos. As it is from Cos, it must also be the approach of Hippocrates. The logical next move would be to cite the Hippocratic whole/parts claim from Plato's *Phaedrus*, where priority is given to 'the whole'.³⁴ In modern discussions of holistic medicine, however, this is rarely cited explicitly: it tends to linger in the background. For example, consider Robson and Baek's "Hippocrates held the belief that *the body must be treated as a whole and not just a series of parts*, which is the underlying concept of the recently emerging *systems biology*";³⁵ by omitting any mention of Plato, this gives the impression that the whole/parts point can indeed be traced to a specific Hippocratic text.

As other contributors to this volume have shown, what is meant by 'the whole' in Plato is in any case far from clear. Is it, as Galen and subsequently Littré thought, the universe, or is it the whole body?³⁶ Is it "all external factors that influence health"?³⁷ And does the passage tell us more about Plato than about what the Hippocratic writers, let alone Hippocrates himself, originally meant? For Wesley Smith, what was meant was "the nature of the whole man", "the nature of the cosmos" and perhaps also "the nature of all body". Smith argued, "As always, Plato uses his language precisely and self-consciously, and if he is purposely ambiguous he will take account of all the meanings he has suggested".³⁸ So, rather than either/or, perhaps we should see this as both/and: the 'whole' is all of these things.

Chishti himself clearly had Plato's *Phaedrus* in mind, although not naming this as the source: "He [Hippocrates] viewed the human body as a complete, integrated whole (as opposed to a collection of parts) and his system of treatments was of a general nature, rather than a specific treatment against one set of symptoms".³⁹ So, we also learn here that, in addition to being opposed to specialisms, holism supports treating the whole person rather than 'specific'

<https://tools.wmflabs.org/pageviews/?project=en.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&range=latest-20&pages=Hippocrates>.

³³ <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/saoj/v10n4/v10n4a03.pdf>

³⁴ 270c1-4, suggesting that both for the soul and for the body one cannot know their nature unless one learns "the nature of the whole". Tsekourakis (1991-3) 164 suggests that any attempt to tie this passage to a single Hippocratic treatise is doomed, as Plato was referring instead to Hippocratic medicine in general.

³⁵ Robson and Baek (2009) 57.

³⁶ Tsekourakis (1991-3).

³⁷ Wellmann (1929) 16-21, cited in W.D. Smith (2002) 38 n.40.

³⁸ W.D. Smith (2002) 46. See also Smith (2002) 48: "Plato left "the whole" ambiguous because both "man as a whole" and "cosmos" are comprehended in the Hippocratic science".

³⁹ Chishti (1988) 12.

treatments. And here is Osborn's development of this: "As a holistic healing system, Hippocratic medicine treated the patient, and not just the disease."

This is interesting wording. In 2013, in one of his assaults on alternative medicine, Edzard Ernst – formerly Chair in Complementary Medicine at the University of Exeter – noted that when he asks alternative practitioners "What do you treat effectively?" he was given answers like "Alternative practitioners, unlike conventional clinicians, do not treat diseases" or "I treat the whole person, not just the disease". In response to these answers, Ernst argued that "any good medicine always has been and always will be holistic. High-jacking [sic] holism as a specific characteristic for alternative medicine is misleading and an insult to all conventional clinicians who do their best to practice good medicine." Ernst's concern is that, by claiming a monopoly on holism and saying that they treat the whole person, alternative practitioners are given what Ernst calls "a 'carte blanche' for treating any disease or any condition or any symptom".⁴⁰

The answers Ernst received and Osborn's statement about Hippocratic medicine are, whether consciously or unconsciously, echoing the quotation I have used in the title of this chapter. Found on many holistic medicine internet sites, often simplified into "treat the (whole) person, not the disease", it is a saying associated with one of the greatest physicians of the modern era, Sir William Osler (1849-1919): "The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease".⁴¹ It has however so far proved impossible to source it in Osler's writings; the nearest quotation may be "Care more particularly for the individual patient than for the special features of the disease."⁴² Hippocrates does not have a monopoly on 'fake quotes'.

Unlike many other modern users of Hippocrates, practitioners of holistic medicine tend not to give 'quotes' but instead simply invoke the name of Hippocrates in support of their beliefs. For example, Sandra Sigur, a practitioner from Florida of reflexology, yoga, reiki and aromatherapy, and a former doula, author of *Healing Groovy* (2015),⁴³ was interviewed for the blog *Windermere Sun* in 2016:

⁴⁰ <http://edzardernst.com/2013/10/alternative-practitioners-treat-the-whole-person-not-the-disease/>. See also the earlier post, "Integrated medicine makes no sense", <http://edzardernst.com/2012/12/integrated-medicine-makes-no-sense/> and the later post, <http://edzardernst.com/2014/10/the-disgraceful-abduction-of-holism/> which dates "clinical holistic medicine" "as far back as Hippocrates".

⁴¹ See <http://www.osler.org.uk/osleriana-2/oslers-aphorisms/>; claimed as the key principle of Chinese medicine on <https://www.chinesemedicinelifing.com/acupuncture/cancer-chinese-medicine-part-3> or used on the website of a natural healer in several traditions on <https://www.drilaurenpolm.com/>.

⁴² I owe this reference to Dr Mary Hague-Yearl, Head Librarian of the Osler Library at McGill University, pers. comm. 24 September 2018; the source is Osler (1899). Dr Hague-Yearl checked with one of the compilers of *The Quotable Osler* (Silverman et al. 2003), Charley Bryan, who "wrote that he was 99% sure that it was merely attributed to Osler, and agreed that an investigation of these attributions would be very interesting indeed". Those who attribute the words to Osler sometimes date them to 1895, but the best I have been able to find here is Shorter (1996) 144, with 381 n. 45 citing the aphorism as being quoted by Clarence B. Farrar in a 1959 article. Shorter later repeated this footnote, in Shorter (2005) 9-10.

⁴³ On how "dis-ease can become disease if left unresolved": <https://www.amazon.com/Healing-Groovy-Realistic-Holistic-Self-Care/dp/1505613256>.

Natural or holistic medicine has been around for over 5,000 years. Hippocrates, who is considered the Father of Modern Medicine, emphasized a holistic approach to medicine, warning doctors not to interfere with the body's ability to heal itself, as well as to treat the body as a whole – mind, body and spirit. The early Hippocratic Oath was revised to exclude the word 'spirit' because it was thought to mean religion, when in actuality our spirit is what defines us as unique individuals (i.e., how we respond differently to life's circumstances).⁴⁴

Holistic here becomes another word for natural. That exclusion of 'spirit' is, I think, a reference to those versions such as the Revised Hippocratic Oath proposed by the British Medical Association in 1997, which have dropped the opening invocation of the Greek gods.⁴⁵

A now-deleted page on the site *Natural Wellbeing* went into more detail. It used to feature a page on “The History of Holistic Medicine: The Ancient Greeks and Holistic Medicine”, by Paulina Nelega.⁴⁶ Written in 2009, this was part of a short series on the allegedly-long history of holistic medicine, all written by Nelega, in which the ancient Greeks provide “another forebearer [sic]”. Nelega is a clinical herbalist based in Vancouver who describes how her passion for “exploring our relationship with nature and the healing properties of plants” developed from growing up surrounded by “majestic cedars [which] shared their timeless wisdom as I sat beneath them”. She went on to explain on the *Natural Wellbeing* site that she then took a “conventional path”, becoming a medical laboratory technologist, which taught her “the benefits – and shortcomings – of allopathic medicine” and encouraged her to understand “our body's innate wisdom and profound intelligence to heal – *vis medicatrix naturae*”.

This phrase features heavily in alternative medicine, sometimes in the mistaken variant *vis mediatrix naturae*; Latin looks good, even if it is not correct.⁴⁷ The Wikipedia page on “*Vis medicatrix naturae*” presents this as the Latin form of a Greek phrase, “*Νόσος ὡς ἰατρὸς ἐστὶ τῆς φύσεως*” (“Nature is the physician(s) of diseases”).⁴⁸ The origin of the phrase in its Latin form may lie with the eighteenth-century William Cullen.⁴⁹ While it has

⁴⁴ <http://windermeresun.com/2016/03/08/natural-healing-with-sandra-sigur/> Sigur supports other myths about Hippocrates, such as “Hippocrates said “let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food”. So, since food is your medicine, I would say there are many deficiencies leading to illness in America.” I discuss this further in King (2019).

⁴⁵ This and other modern versions are discussed by Hurwitz and Richardson (1997).

⁴⁶ <http://www.naturalwellbeing.com/blog/the-history-of-holistic-medicine-the-ancient-greeks-and-holistic-medicine/> accessed 3 September 2018. Nelega can now be found on <https://blog.naturalwellbeing.com/author/paulina-nelega-rh-agh-clinical-herbalist>. According to the Wayback Machine the now-defunct site was updated until 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20180101000000*/http://www.naturalwellbeing.com/blog/the-history-of-holistic-medicine-the-ancient-greeks-and-holistic-medicine/.

⁴⁷ See Neuburger (1944) for an overview; see also Warner (1986) 21 on the reluctance of some physicians to give Nature a ‘personality’, and Warner (1977-78). Naturopathic sites often just repeat the phrase as if we all knew what it meant; <http://wwwFOUNDATIONSproject.com/documents/NDNR-reprint%20oct2010%20Turner-Snider.pdf> and “Hippocrates, 460BC-370 BC, who is considered to be the father of medicine, introduced *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* — the concept of the healing power of nature”, <https://eatbreathegarden.com/horticulture-and-health-according-to-three-wise-men/>.

⁴⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vis_medicatrix_naturae.

⁴⁹ G. Munro Smith (1909) 321 attributes (“as far as I can discover”) the Latin phrase to William Cullen.

been seen as something entirely un-Hippocratic,⁵⁰ it does in fact translate the three opening words of the fifth section of the Hippocratic *Epidemics* 6 although, as Wesley Smith pointed out, “the text of the manuscripts shows signs of commentators’ interference” and *physis* here seems to mean both the nature of the body, and *physis* as opposed to *logos*.⁵¹ The Latin phrase was reclaimed by some orthodox practitioners in the nineteenth century, perhaps in reaction against the excessive interventions of ‘heroic medicine’, but from the 1830s to the 1860s at least, ‘art’ was still believed to trump ‘nature’.⁵²

In holistic circles, the phrase may be taken to mean that there is a natural healing force in everybody, that nature tends towards health and should either be left alone or should be given encouragement to get on with it: or it may be used to suggest that healing depends on actual contact with ‘nature’, whether that is growing a plant in a pot or being in a forest. Nelega not only learned from the cedars, but also trained at Coastal Mountain College of Healing Arts in Vancouver.⁵³ This does not appear to be operating any more, but at one point it was merged with Wild Rose College, a school which offers individual online courses at around \$200-300, and is currently running a “Wholistic [sic] Therapist Diploma” one-year extension course in which for a mere \$100, acting as far as I can tell as a top-up after taking the Practical Herbalist Diploma which costs from \$149.70 a month for ten months.⁵⁴ For a mere \$97, you can submit a “Wholistic Therapist Thesis” and “you have one year from date of approval to complete your thesis”.⁵⁵ “Our emphasis is on the wholism of the individual - the integration of the body, mind, and spirit. We believe wholistic healing is an art to be cultivated through a sound investigation.”⁵⁶

Wild Rose College’s ‘wholistic’ medicine with a ‘W’ deserves some attention, as other holistic sites too prefer this spelling. One institution which used to favour this version of holism is Loma Linda University, a Seventh-Day Adventist school in California, its motto being “To make man whole”.⁵⁷ This concerns the body’s natural tendency to heal “when given the right resources from the outside ... to look beyond the one part of the body that is diseased and to see a person as a whole”.⁵⁸ Adventists “believe the key to wellness lies in a life of balance and

⁵⁰ Hiroshi (1998) is often cited as evidence that “The power, called *vis medicatrix naturae*, has been traditionally associated [sic] with Hippocrates in spite of the fact that he did never mention it anywhere clearly in his writings”, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080610160955/http://sciencelinks.jp/j-east/article/199907/000019990799A0162403.php>.

⁵¹ W.D. Smith, *Hippocrates Vol. VII* (Cambridge, MA: Loeb edition) 255 n. a.

⁵² Whorton (2002) 6-7.

⁵³ <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/paulinanelega>.

⁵⁴ <https://wildrosecollege.com/>; <https://wildrosecollege.com/product/wholistic-therapist-diploma-extension/>.

⁵⁵ <https://wildrosecollege.com/product/thesis-wholistic-therapist/>.

⁵⁶ <https://wildrosecollege.com/home/wild-rose-college-about-page/>.

⁵⁷ <https://lluh.org/about-us/mission-vision-and-values>.

⁵⁸ <https://www.pearlywhitesdds.com/holistic-providers.html>.

temperance” and recommend – although do not insist on – a vegetarian diet.⁵⁹ Ellen G. White, revered by Adventists as a prophet whose writings are second only to the Bible in their relevance, wrote *The Desire of Ages* (1898), where she retold stories from the gospels: about Jesus as the Great Physician who taught that “health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God”.⁶⁰ “For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore”.⁶¹

Loma Linda University’s children’s clinic, opened in 2010, was originally labelled ‘Wholistic’; at the opening, the director of the clinic “differentiated “wholistic” from the more commonly used “holistic”, to emphasize the whole-person care the clinic strives to provide”.⁶² In 2008, Loma Linda had stated that the adoption of this spelling was “to distinguish it from some of the things that have happened in the field of holistic health ... There are many quacks and false promises, and some are simply interested in making money.”⁶³ This spelling, now no longer used at Loma Linda, has become widespread. There are Wholistic Medical Centres in Sydney, Melbourne, Atlanta, Marylebone; at the last of these “the Wholistic Journey, led by Dr Shamim Daya and her team of highly skilled practitioners, incorporates other important modalities” including “bio-meridian testing” (£695 for an initial appointment which checks your “toxic load”), “functional biochemistry” and thermal imaging.⁶⁴ Not all of these invoke the name of Hippocrates to support wholism, but a holistic healer who does – and whose approach has been challenged – is Rebecca Carley, who developed what she calls “the Hippocratic protocol” which she says can cure autoimmune diseases, autism and cancer.⁶⁵ Suspended as an MD in 2003, Carley – who believes she can reverse what she identifies as vaccine-induced diseases – repackaged herself as a ‘holistic’ healer. As her archived website for “the Hippocrates Academy Protocol” puts it, “Note that Dr. Carley does NOT practice medicine, and does NOT give medical advice. Rather, she teaches her students what she would do if she were you after reviewing your individual history of assaults to your immune system.”⁶⁶

Picking up this imagery of “assaults”, it is clear that today holism also involves the belief that other forms of medicine cause harm, and that it does not, because it waits on ‘Nature’ rather than ‘interfering’. As we saw above, Sandra Sigur’s comments on “natural medicine” included the statement that Hippocrates “emphasized a holistic approach to medicine, warning

⁵⁹ <https://www.adventist.org/en/vitality/health/>.

⁶⁰ White (1898) 824; http://www.thedesireofages.com/The_Desire_of_Ages_text/DA.pdf.

⁶¹ White (1898) 824.

⁶² <https://myllu.llu.edu/oncampus/story/?id=3290>.

⁶³ <https://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/2008/01/09/wholistic-for-kids/>.

⁶⁴ <https://www.wholisticmedical.co.uk/>; fees for these services on https://0be15daa-e522-484c-a268-6f028995b8a7.filesusr.com/ugd/01457c_207dfa3b6f6b4787894029a40eb8d270.pdf.

⁶⁵ <http://www.agreenroadjournal.com/2012/05/dr-rebecca-carley-md-now-holistic.html>; on her suspension and the revoking of her licence, <https://www.quackwatch.com/11Ind/carley1.html>.

⁶⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20130925081055/http://www.reversingvaccineinduceddiseases.com/services>; also quoted on https://quackwatch.org/cases/board/med/carley/order_2004/.

doctors not to interfere with the body's ability to heal itself."⁶⁷ This language of interference recalls that other Latin tag of Hippocrates, *primum non nocere*. Many websites stating that Hippocrates wrote "First, do no harm" will elaborate that originally this was *primum non nocere*, without noticing that this is Latin while Hippocrates was Greek. A two-part episode of the hospital drama *Holby City* broadcast in June 2018 used the Latin phrase as its title.⁶⁸

This is one of the popular sayings which the medical profession has now realised cannot be found in its supposed Hippocratic source, the *Oath*; it does not say this, "just as nobody says "Play it again, Sam" in "Casablanca""⁶⁹ In 2005 the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* published a piece by Cedric Smith in which he tried to trace its origins.⁷⁰ Smith, as a pharmacologist, was keen to consider potential adverse drug interactions. One of his key findings was "Who was the author? Not Hippocrates".⁷¹ He wrote that "like a proverb ... it is a crystallized bit of wisdom ... this maxim has several levels of meaning and can be applied to a wide range of situations ... It also *sounds* true, especially with its combination with the Latin."⁷² In 2013 Daniel Sokol found 393 articles in PubMed with "do no harm" in their title; his conclusion was that it is an unhelpful axiom for today, when "Clinicians inflict harm all the time, whether it is by inserting a cannula, administering chemotherapy, performing a tracheotomy ...".⁷³ Wider discussions of what Hippocratic medicine involves, and wider criticisms of mainstream medicine, thus lie behind holistic medicine's current versions of Hippocrates.

Invoking Hippocrates through history

These examples show how references to Hippocrates support a range of alternative healing practices which operate under the 'holistic' – or 'wholistic' – umbrella. Historically, the relationship between western biomedicine ('allopathy') and alternative and complementary medicine has involved many groups engaging with Hippocrates and claiming him as their ancestor, meaning that holistic medicine's current use of his name is far from being an isolated example. In the repeated reclaiming of the true Hippocrates from the hands of a mistaken or deliberately-distorting orthodoxy, while the imagined moral core of the man remains intact, many different versions of 'his' views have been constructed. Those who have called on

⁶⁷ <http://www.windermersun.com/2016/03/08/natural-healing-with-sandra-sigur/>.

⁶⁸ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8490842/>: the 'trivia' for the episode on IMDb read "The episode title, "Primum Non Nocere", is Latin for "First, do no harm", an important ethical rule in the medical profession, meaning "even if you can't make the patient any better, at least make sure you don't make him any worse"".

⁶⁹ Fabre (1997).

⁷⁰ An online account of the non-Hippocratic nature of the phrase is available in an October 2019 piece by N. S. Gill at <https://www.thoughtco.com/first-do-no-harm-hippocratic-oath-118780>.

⁷¹ C.M. Smith (2005) 371.

⁷² C.M. Smith (2005) 375-6.

⁷³ Sokol (2013); Smith is not listed in the references but they are the ones used by him.

Hippocrates show enormous confidence that he was, or would have been, one of their number. In the late nineteenth century, when dosimetry was invented by Adolphe Burggraeve at Ghent, it was placed “under the protection of a great name” by being associated with him; “had he had the benefits of modern medical knowledge, Hippocrates *would have been* favourable” to it.⁷⁴ More recently, if Hippocrates “were living today, no doubt he would be labelled a Naturopath”.⁷⁵

One of the patterns of engagement with the image of Hippocrates, found throughout the history of medicine and still strong today, is to contrast him with whatever the speaker or writer perceives as most negative in mainstream medicine: “appeals to Hippocrates were explicitly and most fundamentally appeals to the past which expressed considerable discomfort with contemporary science and, more generally, with the world that science had created”.⁷⁶ This clearly happens with contemporary holistic medicine websites. The various binaries implied by appeals to Hippocrates today have been summarised by David Newman:

Hippocrates was a holistic practitioner intent on treating the complete person, whereas today we tend to specialize in exquisitely narrow fields of anatomic and physiologic knowledge, leaving the balance of the human body to our colleagues. Hippocrates was a devoted and objective empiricist, while most modern doctors spend so little time with each patient that it’s absurd to claim serious observational skills. Hippocrates was a consummate communicator, while today’s doctors (ask our patients) are walking communication nightmares. Hippocrates felt and demonstrated sympathy, while we’ve chosen a colder, more “scientific” model for doctor-patient interaction ...⁷⁷

Patients today, apparently, even “wonder aloud at how nice it might be to have Hippocrates as their doctor”.⁷⁸

What, then, is really new in the current image of the holistic Hippocrates? Perhaps not as much as we may think. In the second century CE, Galen set himself up as the prophet pointing to the god Hippocrates,⁷⁹ who “was selected to personify medical authority”.⁸⁰ Since then, Hippocrates has consistently stood for a balance of reason, detailed observation, caring bedside medicine, experience, honesty, patriotism and what William Osler referred to in a lecture delivered in 1913 as “the note of humanity”.⁸¹ Galen’s creation of this Hippocrates “seduced” succeeding generations into seeing the Father of Medicine as “the source of true science

⁷⁴ Haller (1981) 272; Weisz (2002) 261, author’s italics.

⁷⁵ <http://www.rethinkingcancer.org/resources/articles/who-was-hippocrates.php>.

⁷⁶ Weisz (2002) 272.

⁷⁷ Newman (2008).

⁷⁸ Newman (2008).

⁷⁹ Harris (1973) 267.

⁸⁰ Rocca (2014) 285.

⁸¹ Osler (1921) 62-3.

perversely misunderstood by those after him”.⁸² In the second century as much as in the mid-twentieth century, we see that pattern of “discomfort with contemporary science” versus the true science of Hippocrates.

In the history of medicine – in contrast to contemporary claims about Hippocrates and holism – claims for the true Hippocrates have traditionally been combined with a quest to identify his “genuine works”: the treatises the man himself wrote.⁸³ Various forms of medicine promoted across the early modern and modern periods show how important it used to be to find a Hippocratic treatise that fitted your view of medicine, one which revealed the true Hippocrates: a few examples must suffice here. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the “Paris Hippocratics” favoured the treatises *Coan Prognoses* and *Epidemics*; the case history format of much of the *Epidemics* sits particularly easily with a Hippocrates who is all about observation and a good bedside manner.⁸⁴ At the same time, Petrus Severinus argued that occult philosophy and the chemical ideas of Paracelsus were closer to true Hippocratic medicine, which meant that *Ancient Medicine* and *Regimen I* had better claims to Hippocratic authorship.⁸⁵ In the seventeenth century, Thomas Sydenham, who studied epidemic disease, presented an empirical, theory-averse Hippocrates and favoured not only *Epidemics* but also *Prognostics* and *Aphorisms* as genuine works, so that “the Hippocrates that Sydenham perceived in those works was the Hippocrates most like himself”.⁸⁶

What is different in the present uses of Hippocrates is that none of this concern for a “genuine work” seems to interest those promoting holistic medicine today, who construct their own claims about Hippocrates with very little reference to any texts. This partly stems from the period between the World Wars, when the neo-Hippocratic movement developed as “a revolt against the system, formalism, academics, professionalism, materialism, and analysis of the nineteenth century”, favouring instead “vitalism, humanism, individualism, and synthesis, a return to Hippocratic doctrine”.⁸⁷ There were regional variations: in Britain, the neo-Hippocratic movement was about Hippocrates as generalist rather than specialist,⁸⁸ while in France it provided support for both homeopathy and naturopathy.⁸⁹ Homeopathy has had a particularly strong relationship with Hippocrates as “an ancestral figure worth of veneration” but also as a practitioner of direct observation of the patient,⁹⁰ which is not always a feature of

⁸² W.D. Smith (2002) 106.

⁸³ Difficult, or perhaps impossible, because of the lack of good external evidence, this quest may be on the resurgence among those studying ancient medicine in the academy; for example, considering *Fractures* and *Joints* and noting their “remarkable” prose style, Craik (2010) 233 wonders “Perhaps indeed we have the words of Hippocrates” here. See also Craik (2015) 289.

⁸⁴ Lonie (1985) 162.

⁸⁵ Shackelford (2002) 63 and 69.

⁸⁶ Cunningham (2002) 103.

⁸⁷ Crookshank (1932) 123, cited in Cantor (2002) 280.

⁸⁸ Cantor (2002) 284.

⁸⁹ Weisz (2002) 268.

⁹⁰ Warner (2002) 222-3.

current holism, as the practitioners discussed in the previous section of this chapter demonstrate. Through “selective reading”, the different treatises of the Hippocratic corpus could be called upon to support homeopathy’s practice of curing like with like as well as allopathy’s cure by opposites.⁹¹

Analysing why the name of Hippocrates was so important for the emerging holistic movement in 1920s and 1930s France, George Weisz argued that “The notion that was most identified historically with Hippocrates was that of “nature” or “natural” healing”; Emile Littré, the great editor and translator of the Hippocratic Corpus, defined “hippocratisme” as “the doctrine which attempts to imitate Hippocrates, giving to this imitation the particular sense of following nature, that is to say of studying the spontaneous effort that it makes and the crises that it produces”.⁹²

Ideas of the healing power of nature, used not only in past forms of holism but also today, could find plenty of support in the Hippocratic Corpus; for example, “The body’s nature is the physician in disease. Nature finds the way for herself, not from thought ... without instruction, Nature does what is needed” (*Epidemics* 6.5.1). Such ideas had also been widely discussed in American medicine of the 1860s. John Harley Warner has argued that the mid-nineteenth-century interest in Nature was a reaction to changing therapeutic interventions, as doctors moved from trying to reduce fever and inflammation by attacking with bleeding and purging, to seeing their role as being more about building up the strength of the patient.⁹³ The conclusion reached was that while “bloodletting had indeed been carried to absurd excesses greatly impeding nature’s work ... this did not mean that bloodletting was necessarily bad in principle”.⁹⁴ Nor did believing that diseases were self-limiting mean that the answer was to do nothing, as the role of the doctor could be to support the body in healing itself. By warning against violent interventions, Hippocrates has long been elided not only with nature but also with safety, providing an antique seal of approval for methods concerned with maintaining a balance with a ‘nature’ seen either as an external factor or as something deep within us.

In response to western biomedicine’s increased focus on pharmacological solutions from the nineteenth century onwards, various alternative “drugless systems” of healing arose.⁹⁵ As James Whorton has charted for the United States (and to a lesser extent for Britain), in the mid-1990s ‘alternative’ medicine (used as an alternative to orthodox medicine) became ‘complementary’ (used alongside orthodox medicine) and then moved towards ‘integrative’ as a range of methods were employed together.⁹⁶ The warmth of that word ‘integrative’ is unusual in the history of the relationship between allopathy and other medical approaches because, formerly, ‘alternatives’ oscillated between trying to graft themselves on to the Hippocratic family tree and wanting to annihilate the established system. At the 1911 party for Andrew

⁹¹ Weisz (2002) 260.

⁹² Weisz (2002) 270, 278 n.82.

⁹³ Warner (1977-8) 301-6.

⁹⁴ Warner (1977-8) 307.

⁹⁵ Gevitz (1988) 125.

⁹⁶ Whorton (2002) 299; Barrett et al. (2003) 938.

Taylor Still, the founder of osteopathy, the toast included: “The name that shall be blazoned out of the Skies of Science will not be Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, but Andrew Taylor Still, the Father of the Healing Art.”⁹⁷

David Whorton has noted that alternative practitioners often consider Hippocrates to be “their doctrinal father”. The Hippocrates of orthodox medicine, Whorton argues, was designated the Father of Medicine because he had rejected supernatural phenomena as the causes of illness. The ‘alternative’ Hippocrates, however, is valued for his ‘natural’ methods of healing, and belief in an “inborn ability of the human body to respond to the insult of illness or injury and restore itself to health”.⁹⁸

Today, alleged Hippocratic holism does not even have to be an ‘alternative’: mainstream medicine wants to claim it too. For example, in 2000, the Royal Society of Medicine held a conference on the topic “Healthcare for the Whole Person: Is Holistic Medicine More Healthy?”⁹⁹ An article by a medical student in the 2008 edition of the American Medical Association’s *Journal of Ethics*’ online section, *Virtual Mentor*, argued for the humanistic integration of Hippocratic holism with modern knowledge. The author gave a view of the history of medicine which suggested that medicine has moved “from prescientific holistic approaches to modern, scientifically supported explanations of pathology”, and contrasted “the integrative Hippocratic view... [with] the specialization view”.¹⁰⁰ This, apparently unconsciously, echoes the concerns of inter-war British neo-Hippocratics, who emphasised Hippocrates as generalist rather than specialist and, looking back at the First World War, criticised what they saw as the specialisation of German education and the centralisation of its institutions, as opposed to the greater focus on the individual and on personal initiative in British society.¹⁰¹ They saw the unity of the organism as a key principle, and – according to the leading neo-Hippocratic Alexander Cawadias – a focus on the “whole individual patient” was essential.¹⁰² Mantri ended with a call for fuller integration to take into account “both the individuality of illness and the universality of disease etiology”.

What we often find in constructions of the medical past is something like the pattern hinted at here: a shift from integration, or holism, or Hippocrates, towards fragmentation and then back again to a new holism; or, perhaps, from holism, to fragmentation, and then to a merger giving the best of both worlds. In this model, which is usually only implicit in the material, medicine in the past is inevitably presented as holistic, until “the turn away from holism in medicine allowed diseases to be located in specific organs, tissues or cells”.¹⁰³ Holism today, whether as a goal of orthodox medicine or a claim for an unorthodox system, thus presents

⁹⁷ Quoted in Whorton (2002) 300.

⁹⁸ Whorton (2002) 3, 6.

⁹⁹ Robson and Baek (2009) 267.

¹⁰⁰ Mantri (2008).

¹⁰¹ Cantor (2002) 284, 286.

¹⁰² Cantor (2002) 289.

¹⁰³ Heggie (2010) 458.

itself as a return to a superior past. This is of course a tried and tested strategy for convincing an audience of the value of a ‘new’ thing: claiming that it is ‘old’, or ancient, or just traditional.

Mantri’s contrast between ‘the integrative Hippocratic view’ and ‘the specialization view’ is worth exploring further. The history of medicine has long been interested in the history of specialisms. Vanessa Heggie’s 2010 article in *Medical History*, “Specialization without the Hospital: The Case of British Sports Medicine”, summarized the main approach as follows: “Specialization in medicine acts to normalize categories of health and sickness that, once constructed, can appear to be obvious and rational divisions of the body, of disease, or of populations”.¹⁰⁴ This underlines the point that, while decisions on how we divide the body into organs or systems or other sorts of ‘part’ are arbitrary, once these categories exist they can then take on a life of their own.

As Roger Cooter argued for the emergence of fracture treatment under the control of orthopaedics, a specialism also needs “professional interests and aspirations” to propel it into existence; its emergence was partly due to World War I leading to a greater interest in accidents and trauma, and partly to orthopaedists “enlarg[ing] their professional space”.¹⁰⁵ Cooter argued that “accidents and trauma cut across the “organ geography” of medical and surgical specialties” and, in an interesting parallel to what I am doing here with holism, argues against the claim that orthopaedics can trace its lineage to “traditional bone-setting [which] appears to legitimate orthopaedic surgeons as the rightful menders of broken bones”;¹⁰⁶ nevertheless, that claim of antiquity was important. Cooter subsequently argued not only that orthopaedics emerged “as a specialized branch of general surgery ... in the early twentieth century in terms of a holistic physiological vision of the structures and functions of the musculoskeletal system—a naturalized division of labor” but also that it later became fragmented into separate smaller branches: “the surgery of the hand, the foot, the ankle, the spine, and so on”.¹⁰⁷ This increasing fragmentation was at least partly due to the various technical developments in the field, in which “knowledge appeared to increase year after year”;¹⁰⁸ “There is no mind so comprehensive that it can keep pace with all the requirements of modern surgery”, as Robert Jones had said in a lecture delivered in May 1925.¹⁰⁹ So, here we have spurious claims of historical continuity (those traditional bone-setters), then the emergence of specialisms due to social and economic factors and also to new techniques, further division into sub-specialties, and then – perhaps – a return to holism?

¹⁰⁴ Heggie (2010) 457. Sports medicine, Heggie showed, was a particularly unpromising area to become a specialism due to the breadth of what it covered: it is “a holistic practice, covering everything from gross musculoskeletal injuries to dietary advice to genetic testing. It has virtually no unique diseases or injuries (one can get tennis elbow cleaning floors) nor any unique treatment modalities or technologies.” On medical specialisation more broadly, see Weisz (2003) and (2006).

¹⁰⁵ Cooter (1987) 306.

¹⁰⁶ Cooter (1987) 307.

¹⁰⁷ Cooter (2003) 467-8.

¹⁰⁸ Heggie (2010) 458.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Cooter (1987) 314.

While mainstream medicine can now claim to be holistic, hits on search engines suggest that there is still more *popular* interest in holism than *mainstream* medical interest.¹¹⁰ I have already alluded to the veiled criticisms of allopathy: holism is seen as a “whole life approach” rather than being about “fragmented (i.e. nonholistic), episodic (i.e. lack of continuum of services), and external symptom-based (as opposed to dealing with the root cause of illness) diagnostics and treatment, mostly depending on the one-fits-all approach and yet on the trial-and-error for treatments”.¹¹¹ Here holism comes a little closer to “personal medicine” – individualised and empowering to the patient¹¹² – but, as ever, holism is defined by what it is *not*: it is not about fragmentation, or about specialists clinging to their little empire of one organ or system.

Conclusion

Everyone – in biomedicine and in various branches of alternative medicine – wants Hippocrates on their team. The term ‘holism’ is always used in a positive way, but in its alternative medicine uses it often contains a barely-veiled criticism of western biomedicine. Considering the whole, whether that is the whole body rather than an organ or system, or the body in relation to its wider setting, clearly has a long history. But contemporary holistic medicine goes well beyond arguing that a knowledge of the whole body is essential to understanding what is wrong with a part of it. Holistic medicine presents Hippocrates as its ancestor, using the strategy of the claim to be returning to the ‘original’, the ‘ancient’. The past is a time of integration, holism and Hippocrates, and the answer to our present problems is to reject fragmentation and return to this holistic Hippocrates. Comparing this with other current uses of Hippocrates as a projection screen on to which we place our ideals of medicine, they usually start from a ‘quote’ – for example, “Let food be thy medicine” – which may or may not have its origins in any text of the Hippocratic corpus. Yet, despite having a rather promising potential source text in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, very few holistic medicine sites referencing Hippocrates make any use of this. I wonder if the problem is that it is in Plato, not the Hippocratic corpus, that the key sentence about the whole and the part is found?

Several medicinal utopias are currently held under the umbrella of ‘holism’. The holistic Hippocrates conjures up nightmares of excessive specialism with a vision both of the individual as being heard and understood and of participating in a worldwide natural healing system. While not the sole preserve of either mainstream or orthodox medicine, here as elsewhere Hippocrates remains a trump card to be played in any medical competition.

¹¹⁰ Robson and Baek (2009) 267. In 2009 they reported nearly 3 million hits for “holistic + medicine”, half a million for “holistic medicine”. In March 2020 I had over 4 million for the first search, and only a few less for the second. They had 154,000 hits for holistic + “managed care” (a key term in US medicine): I had over 2 million. Even taking into account the vagaries of search engines, I suspect that this means the word is moving further into the mainstream.

¹¹¹ Robson and Baek (2009) 20.

¹¹² Barrett et al. (2003) 940-1.