

Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D.

Effective Treatment for

Chronic Fatigue, FIBROMYALGIA Muscle Pain

Editor's Note:

The following interview with Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D. and Hyla Cass, M.D. medical practitioners, is the third in a series featuring health care practitioners who are at the forefront of pioneering nutrition-based medicine as the solution to America's health care crisis. Persons who are committed to reducing human suffering and improving quality of life by making their patients healthier and keeping them out of hospitals. Many of these individuals are highly respected medical doctors who have been certified in their individual medical specialties; however, when asked to describe their practice would respond, "nutrition or wellness-based medicine."

While the success of these modern health care pioneers in changing both the quality of life of their patients as well as the economics of treatment has been significant, it has not seemed to cause an epiphany among either the pharmaceutical oriented government agencies or HMOs. Although it certainly is a factor in the growing incidence of integrative medicine programs in numerous prestigious medical schools across the country—many of who access these same practitioners as their instructors or lecturers.

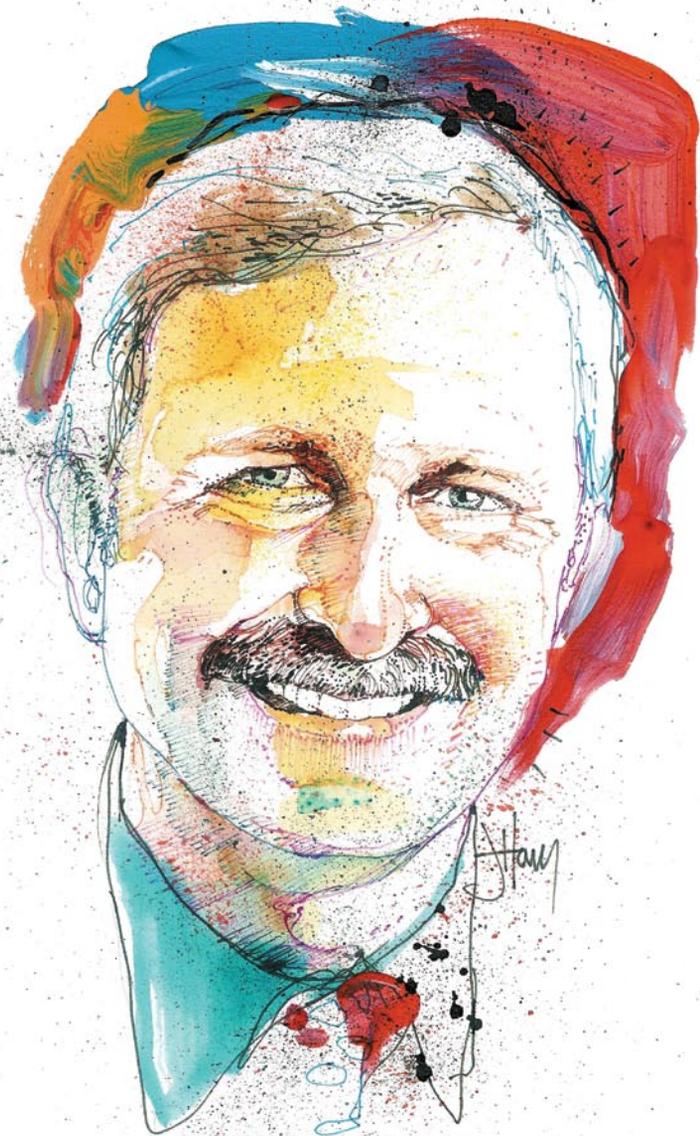
by Lyle Hurd, editor

totalhealth associate editor Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D. is a board-certified internist and Medical Director of the Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers (www.fibroandfatigue.com) nationally. Having suffered with and overcome these illnesses in 1975, he spent the next 32 years creating, researching, and teaching about effective therapies for fatigue and pain. He is the senior author of the landmark studies "Effective Treatment of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia—a Placebo-controlled Study" and "Effective Treatment of CFS & Fibromyalgia with D-Ribose".

He lectures internationally. He is also the author of the best-selling books *From Fatigued to Fantastic!*, *Three Steps to Happiness! Healing through Joy*, and *Pain Free 1-2-3- A Proven Program to Get YOU Pain Free!* (McGraw Hill 2006). His Web site can be found at: www.Vitality101.com.

TH: Dr. Teitelbaum, please relate the personal circumstances which precipitated your committing your medical career to enabling individuals to conquer the insults of chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia.

Dr. T: It began in 1975. I was in my third year of medical school, doing my pediatrics rotation. I had always excelled, having finished college in three years. Now I was the second youngest in a class of over two hundred medical students, and I was continuing to excel. My approach to life was to move quickly—"full speed ahead." But then a nasty viral illness hit me and made it hard for me to even get out of bed for my morning pediatrics lecture. I cannot forget walking into an auditorium full of medical students, the professor saying, "Teitelbaum, why are you..." As he said "late?" I just about collapsed on the steps.



Jeff Ham Illustration

My becoming ill with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and Fibromyalgia (FMS) seemed to close a door to one chapter of my life and open up other doors to whole new possibilities of self-exploration. As I had to drop out of medical school and had no more scholarship or work-study, and was too ill to work, I was also homeless. Taking off in my '65 Dodge Dart, I had the novel experience of having no agenda, no plans. I was to meet many teachers on my journey. Most important, I was taking time to get to know myself.

With my family's and friends' help and support, my own inner work, as well as what I learned from people I met while I was homeless, I recovered my energy and strength and went on to finish medical school and residency. Though I did well, I continued to intermittently suffer the many diverse symptoms seen in fibromyalgia. My experiences with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia left me with an appreciation of the impact of these illnesses and, in fact, turned out to be a blessing. The symptoms that persisted—such as fatigue, aches, poor sleep, and bowel problems—acted as the arena in which I learned

how to help other people overcome these illnesses, and in the last 30 years we have done the ground work needed to make effective treatment available for every one!

TH: The introduction to your first article in *totalhealth* magazine, August 2002, began with, "Are you tired, achy, can't sleep and have brain fog, weight gain and loss of libido? Then you probably have chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) and/or fibromyalgia (FMS)—two syndromes that devastate the lives of over six million Americans. In addition, at any given time, over 25 million Americans are suffering from disabling fatigue that has lasted at least one month. These problems are so common that it is likely that you or someone you know has for years dreamed of the day when s/he would see the headline 'Effective Treatment Developed for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia.'" Where are we today, five years later?

Dr. T: In my opinion there is no question that the day has arrived. After decades of hard work by hundreds of researchers in the field, we have progressed to the point where effective treatment is now available for these illnesses. In our study, over 90 percent of patients improved with treatment.

Ready to Get Well?

Our study titled "Effective Treatment of CFS and Fibromyalgia" (*Journal of CFS*—see full text at www.JacobTeitelbaum.com) showed that over 90 percent of patients improved with treatment ($p < .0001$ vs. placebo), with an average improvement in quality of life of 90 percent. Many patients no longer even qualified for the diagnosis of CFS or fibromyalgia after treatment. In support of our work, an editorial in the *Journal of the American Academy of Pain Management* (the largest multidisciplinary society of pain specialists in United States) noted "the comprehensive and aggressive metabolic approach to treatment detailed in the Teitelbaum study are all highly successful approaches and make fibromyalgia a very treatment responsive disorder. The study by Dr. Teitelbaum et al. and years of clinical experience make this approach an excellent and powerfully effective part of the standard of practice for treatment of people who suffer from fibromyalgia and myofascial pain syndrome".

What is causing these syndromes?

CFS/FMS acts as a "circuit breaker", with the hypothalamus decreasing its function to protect the individual in the face of what is perceived to be an overwhelming stress (just like blowing a fuse/circuit breaker in a house). This center controls sleep, hormones, temperature, and blood flow/blood pressure/sweating. In addition, if your muscles do not have enough energy, they will get stuck in the shortened position and you'll be in pain (think rigor mortis). This "Energy Crisis" can be caused by any of a number of infections, stresses, or injuries as well as by the many chemicals that have been added to our environment.

Four main categories of problems need to be treated

Think “SHIN”!

These are the four key areas that need to be treated for your “circuit breaker to turn back on” and for fatigue and pain to resolve:

1. Sleep. Because the hypothalamic “circuit breaker” that is offline controls sleep, most patients need a mix of natural and prescription sleep treatments. For you to get well and pain free it is critical that you take enough of the correct natural and prescription sleep treatments to get 8 to 9 hours sleep at night. I prefer to start with natural therapies. An excellent one (which I developed—“Revitalizing Sleep Formula” by Enzymatic Therapies—100 percent of my royalties for all products I develop is donated to charity) includes theanine, Jamaican dogwood, wild lettuce, valerian, passionflower, and hops. Take 1–4 capsules 1 hour before bedtime.

2. Hormonal deficiencies. The hypothalamus is the main control center, via the pituitary, for most of the glands in the body. Most of the normal ranges for our blood tests were not developed in the context of hypothalamic suppression or these syndromes. Because of this (and for a number of other reasons) it is usually necessary to treat with natural thyroid, adrenal (e.g.-glandulars such as Adrenal Stress End & DHEA), and ovarian and testicular hormones—despite normal blood tests! These hormones have been found to be reasonably safe when used in low doses.

3. Infections. Many studies have shown immune system dysfunction in FMS/CFS, which can result in many unusual infections. These include viral infections, Lyme, parasites and other bowel infections and most importantly fungal/*Candida* infections.

4. Nutritional supplementation. Widespread nutritional deficiencies are common, and require dozens of nutrients. As people are tired of being part of the “Handful Club” (taking handfuls of supplement tablets each day), I developed a product that contains 50 key nutrients in one capsule and one half to one scoop of powder taken daily (as a good tasting drink). Called the “Energy Revitalization System” by Enzymatic Therapy, it replaces well over 35 supplement tablets with one drink.

Ribose (Corvalen)—An Exciting New Discovery

Corvalen (D-Ribose by Valen Labs) is an outstanding new nutrient (a special sugar—even okay for those who need to avoid sugar) for those of you who want a powerful energy boost. In addition to its role in making DNA and RNA, those of you familiar with biochemistry remember Ribose as the key building block for making energy. In fact, the main energy molecules (like “energy dollars”) in your body (ATP, FADH, etc.) are made of ribose plus B vitamins/phosphate. That makes these energy molecules similar to the paper that money is printed on—kind of like being able to print your own energy currency.

Corvalen has many uses, including treating heart muscle weakness (Congestive Heart Failure). We were so impressed with this product that our research center recently completed a study which has been published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. Two thirds of CFS/Fibromyalgia patients improved, with an average increase in quality of life of 30 percent—outstanding for a single nutrient. Take 1 scoop 3 times a day for 2 weeks, then decrease to a scoop twice a day, but lower the dose if you get hyper from being too energized. The use of Ribose (Corvalen) is a major step forward in treating fatigue with the average CFS/FMS patient in the study having a 45 percent improvement in energy after 2–3 weeks. In our study, pain, sleep, and “brain fog” also improved. Ribose is also very helpful in patients with heart disease.

There are many other treatments available as well. They can also be seen at my Web site (www.Vitality101.com) which contains a treatment protocol with over 270 effective therapies and detailed instructions for use. Treatments are broken down by category (e.g., sleep, yeast treatments, pain, etc) with natural alternatives offered for all prescriptions. Many of the needed treatments can also be found there. In addition, there is an exciting new development. The Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Centers (see www.FibroAndFatigue.com) has opened up a chain of clinics throughout the U.S. that see patients from all over the world. Begun by a wonderful businessman, Bob Baurys, who had CFS and recovered using this protocol, he began FFC to make effective treatment available to everyone. This was after he experienced the same abusive ignorance that most CFS patients suffer through in our current health care system. They have seen over 5,000 CFS and Fibromyalgia patients in the last three years, and over 80 percent of their patients are feeling better by the four month follow up visit. I was so impressed by this group, that I agreed to become their medical director—and can assure you they give outstanding, knowledgeable, and compassionate care.

At this time, you now have all the tools you need to get well. We wish you all of God’s blessings and our best wishes in your healing. ■

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