



FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE: Treating the Cause Versus the Symptoms

The goal of Functional Medicine is to determine how and why illness occurs and restore health by addressing the root causes of disease. The treatment plan is personalized for each individual. This science-based approach empowers patients and practitioners to work together to treat the underlying causes of disease and promote optimal wellness.

Functional Medicine considers the genetic, physiological, environmental, and lifestyle factors that influence health and disease. "The precise manifestation of each cause depends on the individual's genes, environment, and lifestyle, and only treatments that address the right cause will have lasting benefit beyond symptom suppression." (IFM)

Functional Medicine addresses the whole person, not just an isolated set of symptoms. In contrast, conventional medicine is often centered around symptom relief. Prescription medications may relieve symptoms or treat an acute issue, but may not resolve the root problem.

For example:

1. Hormones affect all aspects of a person's health. When hormone levels decline, dramatic changes can occur that affect many aspects of health and well-being. Bioidentical hormones (estrogens, progesterone, testosterone and thyroid hormones) can be compounded in individualized doses to meet each patient's specific needs.
2. Several studies have investigated the effect of gut health and prebiotic and probiotic intervention on emotional dysregulation. Using cortisol as an index of the stress response, the probiotics *Lactobacillus helveticus* and *Bifidobacterium longum* as well as the prebiotic galactooligosaccharide boosted the patients' resilience to stress and improved emotional responses.

Our compounding pharmacist works with physicians to target the root cause of each patient's problems and customize therapies that meet the individual's needs. We can also recommend quality supplements to restore or achieve optimal wellness. Your questions are welcome.

More information can be found at <https://www.ifm.org/functional-medicine>.

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