ku_logo2006Kaplan University

HW215 Stress: Models For Health and Wellness

Kaplan University

The Humoral Concept of Disease, The Anatomical Theory of Disease, and The Germ Theory.

By

Nina Mosell

Throughout history many significant theories have been made that have influenced and changed the way we look at science. It can be said that the humoral concept of disease, the anatomical theory of disease, and the germ theory, together, have influenced and brought about the way we look the science of health today. Without all 3 of these theories (being theorized in the specific order I have written out) I believe that our modern understanding of health and wellness would not be at the high level it is today.

The humoral concept of disease was the idea that a person was composed of four elements: black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm (humoral.edu). If any of these elements were not in balance then this was the cause of a particular sickness or disease that a person was exhibiting. Humoral treatments included bloodletting, vomiting, enemas (basically anything that helped one purge themselves). Like modern medicine, the humoral concept observed the fluids of the body including blood and urine, and also took into account the patient and their description of their symptoms (humoral.edu).

The anatomical theory of disease focused specifically on ones organs as the cause of a symptom or disease. While this concept was being explored, scientists examined and focused more specifically on the pathological and symptomatic connections to different diseases and sicknesses (studymode.com). Basically if a certain symptom was observed or described one could determine or assume the organ that was being affected (or doing the affecting). This concept helped show that blood could transport a disease throughout the body and organs. This concept is most famous for being explored by Giovanni Baltista Morgangi (studymode.com).

The germ theory is the theory that states the presence of microorganisms (bacteria, viruses) is the cause of disease and sickness (sciencemuseum.org). Because of this theory, the idea that specific hygienic practices would help prevent the spread of disease was developed. For example, doctors realized the importance of sanitizing their instruments between uses as well as washing their hands between patients. Germ theory also led to the discovery /invention of proper antiseptics (sciencemuseum.org).

All three of these theories focused on balancing one’s body. The Humoral theory is different from the anatomical theory and the germ theory in that it thought that a person’s sickness came from one of their four elements being somehow imbalanced and a means of purging was a way to restore balance. The anatomical theory is different from the other two theories in that it focused on the connection of symptoms to specific organ malfunctions. Finally the germ theory is different from both the anatomical and humoral theories in that it focuses on a microscopic analysis of symptoms and diseases.

All three of these diseases are historically significant because without all of them leading to one another such advancements in medicine would not have been made today. Without the humoral theory the idea anatomical theory would not have come about. Also without the anatomical theory giving idea to the germ theory we would not have such things as antibiotics or antiseptics today.

In conclusion all three theories have been significant in helping us understand the human body and how it is altered in relation to sickness, as well as what it really means on a microscopic level to be sick or have a disease (and hopefully how to cure/fix it). Without these three theories I truly believe that we would be much farther behind in understanding health and wellness.

References:

Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics: Humoral Theory. Harvard.edu. Retrieved April 20, 2013, from <http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/contagion/humoraltheory.html>

Germ Theory. ScienceMuseum.org.UK. Retrieved April 20, 2013, from <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/techniques/germtheory.aspx>

Humoral, Anatomical and Germ Theories of Disease: the Influence on Today’s Health and Wellness. *StudyMode.com*. Retrieved April 20, 2013, from <http://www.studymode.com/essays/Humoral-Anatomical-And-Germ-Theories-Of-865085.html>