

IRISH MEDICAL INDEPENDENT

Europe's first ever nutritional clinic for mental health

Ailbhe Jordan | 24 Jun 2010

Ireland may become the site for Europe's first nutrient therapy clinic for the treatment of mental health and behavioural disorders, the Medical Independent has learned.

Global pioneer Dr Bill Walsh will explore the possibility when he travels to Dublin next month to give a conference on nutrient therapy, which uses simple vitamins, minerals and essential oils to address chemical imbalances in the brain that lead to mental disorders ranging from depression to ADHD.

A chemical engineer by trade, Dr Walsh became interested in nutrient therapy while working with the families of inmates in a Chicago prison.

He went on to found the Walsh Institute in Chicago, the world's biggest nutritional clinic for biochemical disorders.

The treatment - which was first used in Canada in the 1960s - has proved successful for thousands of patients, who have stopped or reduced dramatically the use of medication to treat their mental health conditions. But psychiatrists are reluctant to embrace the benefits of this treatment, according to Dr Walsh.

"I get a lot of phone calls from doctors who say 'I've got this patient who I've been working with for a few years, they went to your clinic and now they're better; can you please tell me what you did? What was the treatment?'" he told the *Medical Independent*.

"The answer is that the weapons we use are nutrients; vitamins and minerals. Right at that point, half of the doctors lose interest, and some of them will pop up and say, 'How could that possibly work, don't you need a powerful drug for a serious condition like schizophrenia or autism?'"

"If they're still on the line I'll answer by asking the question: Where do our neurotransmitters come from? Where do we get serotonin, dopamine and all the other neurotransmitters? Really, they come from nutrients.

"We're not born with our supply of our neurotransmitters, they're basically created every day. And scientists have now worked out step-by-step how these individual neurotransmitters are formed and how nutrients are involved.

"Most people have some abnormalities in nutrient levels. And if it happens to be one of those nutrients that is critically important in forming, say, serotonin, you can expect that there will be a problem with your mental health."

There is ample evidence to support the efficacy of Dr Walsh's therapy; a recent outcome study of 200 patients with violent behaviour disorders showed that in almost 90 per cent of cases, nutrient therapy treatment over the course of a year led to a complete or partial reduction in violent incidents.

Other research carried out by the Walsh Institute showing links between postnatal depression and elevated copper levels has been published in peer-reviewed journals in the US. He is also doing research with epigenetic therapy, the study of inherited changes in gene expression caused by mechanisms other than changes in the underlying DNA sequence, which he says is the "next revolution in mental health".

"I think the likelihood is that there is going to be cures to many of the most troubling problems in mental health," he said.

"The greatest excitement right now is in cancer research. My guess is that this is all going to be worked out. It might take a couple of decades, but as soon as they understand which genes, for example a tumour suppression gene that might have been turned off epigenetically, we will have the capability of reversing that.

"And it looks like autism is epigenetic, it looks like schizophrenic disorder is epigenetic, OCD, cancer; even ageing has a lot to do with epigenetics. Everyone is going to know about epigenetics in a few years."

Dr Walsh left the Walsh Institute two years ago to concentrate on running an international physician training programme he set up in Australia eight years ago. The programme has trained more than 70 doctors in nutrient therapy - including one Irish GP, Dr Edmond O'Flaherty, who is one of the only practitioners in Europe to use nutrient therapy on patients and has seen great success.

Dr Walsh is currently writing a book about his revolutionary work, which will be published later this year.

The Walsh Research Institute Dublin Outreach Conference 2010 takes place July 17th in the Trinity College Conference Centre.