

National College of Natural Medicine Launches New SIBO Center

National College of Natural Medicine (NCCNM) has announced the opening of NCCNM Clinic's SIBO Center, believed to be the first natural-medicine clinic in the US with a center dedicated to the treatment of small intestine bacterial overgrowth (SIBO), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and associated gastrointestinal disorders. IBS, one of the most common and hard-to-treat health conditions, is thought to affect more than 60 million Americans. A small but growing number of physicians are recognizing the significant link between IBS and SIBO.

A study published in 2000 in the *Journal of Gastroenterology* reported that 80% of those suffering with IBS symptoms of bloating, stomach pain, diarrhea, or constipation were found to actually have SIBO, a chronic bacterial infection of the small intestine. Because SIBO is often unrecognized or misdiagnosed, the symptoms can worsen without treatment. Patient demand for help with SIBO has been largely unmet, as standard Western medical treatment options often do not resolve the condition.

A New Clinical Approach to IBS

Professor Steven Sandberg-Lewis, ND, and SIBO Medical Director Allison Siebecker, ND, codevelopers of NCCNM's new SIBO Center, have been collaborating with their medical counterparts on hard-to-treat gastrointestinal issues for several years. Their efforts have met with much success.

Sandberg-Lewis observed, "Medical doctors who unsuccessfully treated patients with IBS began referring them to us. Nutrition is one of the cornerstones of naturopathic

medicine, so we work closely with our patients who test positive for small intestine bacterial overgrowth using various diets to maximize their nutrition without feeding the overgrowth of bacteria. After treating IBS patients with a combination of pharmaceutical or herbal antibiotics along with diet, we found that we were having very successful treatment outcomes, and the referrals began to increase."

The big shift for Sandberg-Lewis and Siebecker came when QuinTron Instrument Company Inc., based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, donated two BreathTracker machines to NCCNM Clinic to test patients for SIBO. The BreathTrackers accurately measure the amount of trace gases, such as hydrogen and methane, produced by bacteria in the small intestine. This overgrowth can interfere with the absorption of iron, vitamins, and essential fats.

Successful Case Studies

Sandberg-Lewis has patients who have suffered severely from SIBO for more than 20 years. They were referred to him after enduring a battery of tests, including upper GI endoscopies, colonoscopies, and abdominal CT scans, which came back negative, showing no cause for their acute pain and distress. Sandberg-Lewis said that within months of SIBO treatment, including the restriction or elimination of certain foods from their diets, patients' gastrointestinal distress ceases and many report much-welcomed weight loss. "As health is restored, many of our patients tell us they feel like their lives are being returned to them," he said. "I feel privileged to be able to help patients this way."

The decision to open a dedicated SIBO Center within NCCNM Clinic came with the success both naturopathic doctors have had treating gastrointestinal conditions in their patients and in preventing relapses of the condition. Sandberg-Lewis explained, "We realized that by treating SIBO, we were on the leading edge of a new clinical approach to IBS and other SIBO-related health disorders, such as chronic iron deficiency anemia, rosacea, fibromyalgia, and gastroesophageal reflux."

He noted, "Patient demand for standard medical or holistic help with these diseases is woefully unmet. Few practitioners understand the basic principles of SIBO or effective treatment for IBS. Patients need access to testing, pharmaceutical and herbal management, nutritional advice and experienced guidance by qualified health-care practitioners."

About NCCNM

Founded in Portland in 1956, NCCNM is the oldest naturopathic medical school in North America and an educational leader in classical Chinese medicine and CAM research. NCCNM offers three accredited four-year graduate medical degree programs in naturopathic and classical Chinese medicine, as well as a master of science degree in integrative medicine research and a master of science degree in nutrition. Its community clinics provide low-cost medical care throughout the Portland metropolitan area. In addition to the campus-based NCCNM Clinic, NCCNM practitioners attend to approximately 40,000 patient visits per year. Until July 2006, NCCNM was known as the National College of Naturopathic Medicine. The name change reflects the diversity of the college's programmatic degree offerings. Visit www.nccnm.edu for more information.

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