



Their Wheel of Health provides a wonderful illustration of the depth and breadth of the integrated medicine approach that they offer.

Another, longer definition, is from The Bravewell Collaborative

What has come to be called integrative medicine is a rapidly growing and highly credible field that seeks to integrate the best of Western scientific medicine with a broader understanding of the nature of illness, healing and wellness. In seeking to return the soul to medicine, integrative medicine is grounded in the healing relationship—practitioners and patients share information as well as compassion as together they seek ways to achieve optimal health. This approach to giving care focuses on healing the whole person and addresses a person’s body (one’s physical self), mind (one’s mental and emotional state), spirit (one’s personal connection to the transcendent), and community (one’s web of relationships and environment). Informed by evidence, integrative medicine makes use of all appropriate therapeutic approaches, healthcare professionals and disciplines to achieve optimal health and healing and strives to achieve wholeness and health as well as cure illness and disease. Because an informed, empowered patient will make better choices about his or her healthcare and lifestyle options, patient education is an essential element of integrative care.

I remember the first time I read these two definitions - my heart lifted – this is what medicine should surely be about? Patient-centred relationships, compassion, addressing mind, body, spirit and environment, focusing on health and healing as well as disease and illness, and empowering patients to make better choices – these principles were bread and butter for my somewhat disillusioned medical self – they were inspirational and uplifting and surely describing the medicine of the future?



*CAM Treatments - Complimentary & Alternative Medicine Treatments

As time has passed, and with the experience that comes with practising for more than 7 years as an integrated medical doctor, I have reflected long and hard on the subject of integrated medicine and come to a couple of realisations that have brought me (in a positive way) down to earth. Whereas I used to see a future in which all people would be offered within the NHS, the width and depth of integrated medical services, I now see a different future, one that requires me to distinguish integrated holistic healthcare from integrated medicine. They are not the same entity.

INTEGRATED HOLISTIC HEALTHCARE

I define integrated holistic healthcare as the provision of the best possible level of whole-person care, using the most effective and cost-effective approaches from conventional and complementary medicine for the purpose of helping individuals achieve optimum health and healing. Put another way this is providing the best of conventional and complementary medicine within a holistic framework. This exists to a degree already, and I do see a future where this will be