

INTERVIEW with MICHAEL E. PLATT, M.D. by WJ CARREL

WJ Carrel__Please talk about your background – where you were born, what motivated you to become a physician, where you studied and practiced.

Dr. Platt.__I was born and raised in New York City and went to medical school in NYC and did a lot of my training at Metropolitan Hospital; this is where I fell in love with medicine. I did my internal medicine residency in Washington, D.C. at Washington Hospital Center, then headed to the west coast. I went to work for Kaiser Permanente in California and in those days the reason for Kaiser's existence was preventive medicine, of which I was an advocate. At Kaiser, every blood test, every procedure, and every medication was covered by insurance, and Kaiser gave me an hour with each patient. HMOs were run by physicians at that time. Then somewhere along the line, insurance companies entered the picture and preventive medicine was tossed out; it became managed care, which was their way of saying "What's the least we can do and still keep these patients' alive". So it went from being the best type of medicine to the not so best. Nowadays physicians spend about four minutes with each patient, and they don't have time to keep people well. So because my goal for my patients is to get them well, I practice outside what is considered traditional medicine.

I have the luxury of spending about an hour with each patient. This gives me the opportunity to determine the causation of their illness. I do this by exploring the family background, learning about the kind of medications they are on which are often a big source of illness, and I look at any kind of symptoms they have that may point toward a hormonal imbalance. The patient's family situation can have a tremendous impact on their health.

When you put everything together, it makes it real simple to get people well again. As much as possible I try to eliminate people's medications, and I also replace the hormones people are missing, bringing them back into balance.

WJ Carrel__How did you discover the concept of using bio-identical hormones for healing and preventive medicine?

Dr. Platt__My interest in hormones came from a number of different areas. My mother died from breast cancer, largely attributable to the fact she was put on estrogen. I was later able to determine she was missing a hormone that could have prevented her death from happening the way it did. She was estrogen dominant her whole life. And it was because of my mother's experience that I developed a strong disrespect for estrogen, which happens to be the most commonly replaced hormone by doctors, even though women never stop making it. Because of this, I always question the use of estrogen in women.

My mother's death from breast cancer led me to a study of hormones. What I also realized from this experience is that I had inherited her hormones. Doctors receive no training in hormones in medical school, even today. Most doctors are unaware that men and women have identical hormones. Once I realized this, I knew that my own medical problems were related to the same

hormone my mother was missing. In school this caused me to have ADD, though they didn't call it that back then. I had typical ADD behavior. I never opened a book until the night before an exam.

WJ Carrel__How did you make that correlation, that you inherited the same hormone pattern your mother had? That's a big leap.

Dr. Platt__Well, if you looked at my mother's physiology, her large abdomen and thin arms and legs, there is only one thing that creates this, namely, an over-production of insulin. This had a direct correlation to the fact that I would, at times, nod off between 3 and 4 pm. This is the time of day that insulin peaks. If you take sugar away from brain, you can't focus. The term for this is hypoglycemia, which to me is the same thing as ADD.

WJ Carrel__Please continue with how you discovered hormones and your conviction they have a relationship to wellness.

Dr. Platt__During my career I also worked in convalescent hospitals. It was in these hospitals I realized we live in a world where there is no preventive medicine. Working with patients in convalescent hospitals you become very aware we are doing something wrong. Convalescent hospitals are a microcosm of everything that's wrong with healthcare today... These patients are typically overmedicated and being treated for diseases that could have been preventable with natural hormones. Problems related to dementia and fractured hips could have been prevented. And one has to ask, if 90% of diabetes is caused by too much insulin, then why are diabetic patients given meds that stimulate the body to make even more insulin? It's frustrating to try to help get people well within these parameters. You cannot practice medicine as it is practiced now and get people well.

I remember during my New York City training going down to Bellevue Hospital where the medical examiner's office was. There were always at least three young women being autopsied who had died of a pulmonary embolism from pelvic vein thromboses attributable to birth control pills. The first 10 years Premarin was on the market, upwards of 2 million women came down with cancer of the uterus. Physicians and drug companies have always known that estrogen causes cancer. I've always found it interesting that although it's illegal to sell a drug that causes cancer, estrogen remains on the market. In fact, estrogen is associated with six different cancers in women. If there was a drug that caused six different cancers in men do you think it would still be on the market?

Women have been abused by the medical system as long as I've been in practice. You know one out of every 50 women gets cancer of the ovaries. This is a cancer that if they catch it early is 100% curable; if it spreads it is usually fatal. There is a blood test called the CA-125 test that can detect early cancer of the ovaries, but the problem is this test is not covered by insurance and is rarely performed. Once a woman is known to have cancer of the ovaries, insurance will pay, and of course by then it's too late. Actress Gilda Radner, who died of this cancer, implored women to have this test. Interestingly, the PSA test for detection of prostate cancer is covered by insurance.

WJ Carrel__You have written a book about bio-identical hormones, how did the idea come to you, and why did you write the book?

Dr. Platt__A number of reasons. The book was a result of several influences. I had a lot of patients who wanted to know why I didn't write a book. A part of me felt that perhaps it might be my legacy to leave a journal of my particular approach to medicine that comes from a different perspective. I

wrote the book but did not publish it. What influenced me to publish it was Suzanne Somers and her book *The Sexy Years*. I respect the fact that she made women aware of bio-identical hormones. I like the fact that she made women aware they should become proactive about their health. However, her advice to women about the type of hormone replacement therapy they should receive, which she got from her doctor, was ill conceived and deleterious to any woman's health. So this was a huge influence, I had such a strong incentive to get it published after this.

WJ Carrel__Is there any special research or experience that contributed to this book?

Dr Platt__My total clinical experience of 35 years is what contributed to this book. If people will notice, there are no references in my book because it is all based on my own clinical observations working with my own patients.

WJ Carrel__What was the hardest part to write? The easiest?

Dr Platt__I think my love for medicine and my appreciation for what hormones can do made writing the book very easy. 80% of primary care physicians when polled say, given another chance, they would not have gone to medical school because they do not enjoy what they are doing now. I understand this. For me it's the opposite. It's very rewarding for me to have a patient come in and say, "Doc, in my entire life I never felt so good." Unfortunately, many doctors don't have this experience. 80% of my patients are from another state, and some fly in from other countries. What this tells me is that patients are not being served well by traditional medicine. They wouldn't have to travel so far if traditional medicine was working. So I also wrote the book to give people an understanding of why they are not well. There is a "What do I do now?" chapter that outlines what readers need to do to get better. They can then go to their own doctors and tell the doctor what they want.

WJ Carrel__Your work is considered controversial by some, how do you view it?

Dr Platt__I'm probably viewed as controversial by 90% of physicians. The utilization of bio-identical hormones is not part of traditional medicine so it is understandable a lot of people would question why I do this because physicians have never been trained in the use of hormones. It's controversial because it's not traditional, yet it's breaking new ground. Remember, it wasn't that long ago that it was controversial for physicians to wash their hands before surgery.

WJ Carrel__What is your goal as a physician? What is your philosophy for practicing medicine?

Dr Platt__My goal would be for medical professionals to focus on how the body operates so they can approach illness from causation instead of offering band-aids.

WJ Carrel__What is most important about your work?

Dr Platt__To me, the satisfaction of getting people well again. I know I'm making a difference in people's lives; it's a powerful feeling to know this.

WJ Carrel__What would you like people to know about you?

Dr Platt__I'm passionate about wellness; I'm passionate about putting the mind and the body in balance, and getting people better again.