

Dr. Sylvester Yong: My name is Sylvester Yong. I'm a doctor, a medical doctor practicing in Singapore. I've been a member of I-ACT since the mid 1990s I think and so that's almost a good 16, 17 years. That's a long time. Currently I'm a board member of I-ACT and I'm serving in the capacity as the Scientific Review Committee chairperson as well as supporting them in the Finance Committee as a chairperson. So I've been with I-ACT for about the past six years now. Well, I mean going back it's been as far as almost 15 years since I've been coming to I-ACT. The convention every year in different parts of the countries, part of the fun is coming and enjoying the city, but more importantly the other part is coming to enjoy the friendship with different members and sharing in the understanding and learning about the procedure and practice of colon hydrotherapy. It's been very interesting over these past years.

Julie Tyler: So you are happy that you're a member. It's helped you and you would recommend it to other practitioners?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh, absolutely. I think it's important to be part of an association where you can share in the understanding of a procedure of colon hydrotherapy because there's a lot of misconception currently about what colon hydrotherapy offers. And there's very little opportunity for learning about the practice or the procedure in different settings because every individual has their own way of doing things and I-ACT offers the opportunity for a meeting of the minds and also a greater understanding of how people do different things now and then by this sharing experience, we learn and we grow and that's very important.

Julie Tyler: So I would just like to know how you got into the business of practicing colon hydrotherapy.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Okay. That's going back a long way. I've been in medical practice—I'm a conventional medical doctor and I've been in practice since the mid 70s, so that's almost 40 odd years. Initially, my interest had been in the field of geriatric medicine, that's to do with aging and the problems related to that. Having been in practice for just 20 years or so and doing the conventional bit of it, it always seemed like there was a little bit of dissatisfaction with the outcome of whatever medical recommendations, be it drugs or procedures, and so I started exploring other opportunities of healing and treatment. And because of this, I explored the different modalities in terms of health and healing and the different complementary health practices. I mean I would have said that I explored it rather than studied to gain an understanding like acupuncture, learn about the meridians, the acupuncture points and everything, learn and pursue things like aromatherapy, even maybe homeopathy and chiropractic medicine as well as osteopathy just to gain a bit of

understanding. So in the end, I mean you get to understand that manipulation like chiropractic medicine and osteopathy can help, energy medicine like biofeedback, bioresonance all can help and herbal medicine I used too. And then I got introduced to colon hydrotherapy just by accident because there was an establishment offering the procedure. It was started by a businessman who employed a couple of nurses and then after a short period of their business, the authorities came down on them, they needed the services of a medical doctor to be around to supervise or to be on site when the procedure is happening, and obviously it doesn't work out as a business. So in the end, they offered it to me and I took over the practice. And having done that obviously I went into it more deeply to gain a better understanding and the more I got into it, the more I realized how useful this simple procedure was.

Julie Tyler: So you were not made aware of all of this while you were in medical school.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh, no.

Julie Tyler: Things like energy meridians and homeopathy and biofeedback, none of this was sort of covered in med school.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh, no. Yeah, I mean I graduated in 1969. It was in those long ago days. No, and conventional medicine is just for doctors to practice and there's a standard way of treating with drugs, surgery, or radiation and that's it.

Q: Where were you trained?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: I was trained in Singapore. But I did a postgraduate in England. So no, I mean this transition into complementary practices really was a gradual process. It's about discovering a new dimension of healing practices and embracing it and starting to understand that we are looking at prevention rather than cure because I think my take on complementary practices is really about maintaining and improving function to avoid disease, whereas conventional medicine is about treating disease when you have the problem already. So I mean colon hydrotherapy is actually one such approach. You restore the function of elimination purely through the process of irrigating the bowel, hydrating the bowel contents, activating the bowel to facilitate the evacuation, and there's no dispute about that. And that's part of the education I'm trying to impart to other colon therapists because I think that a lot of colon therapies claim that the procedure can heal certain health problems, but if you really can allow things to move and be eliminated from the body, you actually get rid of a lot of the obstacles to healing and that's important.

Julie Tyler: Do you think that the information is getting to other medical doctors? Do you think that there could be more education for them about the benefits of this that they in turn would communicate to their patients?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, that remains...well, I won't call it a paradox; it remains a constraining issue because there isn't any proper documentation about what colon irrigation or the practice of colon hydrotherapy is about. There are very few publications available to provide an objective understanding of the procedure.

Julie Tyler: So we were talking about other physicians, M.D.s, they don't have documentation that they can cite or there isn't information that's readily available for them to access.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: That's right.

Julie Tyler: That they would in turn provide to their patients. Why do suppose that that is? What's been the reason or the holdup or why the lack of information?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, the lack of availability of publications really lies in the fact that practitioners in the field of colon hydrotherapy in the past are nonmedical therapists. Many of them are laypersons who have had the procedure carried out, have enjoyed the benefits and wanted to offer it in their practice and they don't have the training and the background knowledge to be able to document or to write an article, okay? But in modern days, there's more medical personnel now adopting and embracing the procedure and this is happening. But again, many of these practitioners are adopting it for financial reasons, all right, because it's something that they can add onto their practice as an additional source of income or revenue. So their interest is not writing about or educating people about the procedure, their interest is all about getting the benefit of the business of colon hydrotherapy. So what's lacking are the publications that can validate the value of this practice and this is something whereby as chairperson of the Scientific Review Committee in I-ACT I'm trying to accomplish. And personally I am presenting certain papers in some of the international meetings and trying to get some publications across. So what's important is to conduct more research and studies into the procedure of colon hydrotherapy and allow more papers to be published that are acceptable by medical standards.

Julie Tyler: And who are the individuals who are allowed to conduct those studies and write those papers? Is it only the medical doctors who are allowed to do that?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yeah. For the moment because of the limitations of the procedure, such papers will have to come from medical persons, medical doctors and from institutions. But the irony of it is, there are very few people who are in the practice offering the procedure that have a good understanding of the procedure.

Julie Tyler: Could you estimate how many medical doctors are performing these procedures since they're the ones who are in a place of authority to bring it to light?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: It's hard to give a concrete figure, but I would say the number of experienced medical personnel would be less than 100 worldwide. It's a very small number.

Julie Tyler: Worldwide less than 100?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yeah.

Q: In Singapore where you practice, do you have conversations with doctors there on this modality at all?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: No, unfortunately not. You see, I'm a medical doctor and I'm one of the doctors who are actually "hands on." I work on the client throughout the procedure and I manage every client personally. Now there are many doctors who operate a colon hydrotherapy center, they actually only employ nurses or assistants who carry out the procedure and they know the outcome is good, but they don't have a firsthand experience or understanding about the procedure and that is the problem that we face.

Julie Tyler: How could you get more interest by the M.D.s to start documenting their results, the patients' results?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yeah. The only way to attract the interest of M.D.s is to publish papers and clinical studies to show the efficacy of the procedure in certain indications, especially problems of constipation, functional bowel diseases like irritable bowel problem, and also one of the other indications is preparation for colonoscopy. And there's a growing interest in this area and they are sent to us now doing a fair amount of this procedure in the preparation of colonoscopy. And I think in the near future such papers are going to be forthcoming.

Julie Tyler: So you think that once one paper comes out and then another paper and it's starting to get some attention that more medical doctors will become aware of those papers and that documentation and then it will hopefully in turn inspire them to continue with that momentum.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Definitely.

Julie Tyler: And hopefully then I guess they would use that to build their own practice and it would only add to the effectiveness of what they're offering as treatment to their own patients.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, I mean to also attract the interest of medical doctors really, you need to be able to demonstrate to them the efficacy and safety of the procedure in certain clinical situations where current management options are limited or the results are not satisfactory and such conditions will include chronic constipation, which is a fairly common problem, especially in the elderly patients. Even in functional constipation, it's a common problem because people don't eat enough fiber and they don't drink enough water or for whatever other reasons. So these are the initial papers that we need to publish in order to attract their attention and interest. And constipation is a clear indication for colon hydrotherapy.

Q: With your patients, do you recommend it to them just as a preventative method as something that it would benefit them? How do you present it?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, essentially there are two types of patients who come and request the procedure. One type is the group of people who want to enjoy or improve their health and wellbeing and they come in and they may have certain minor issues like some skin problems, some allergies and some aches and pain here and there and they just feel, "Hey, doctor. I don't feel 100 percent. I want to have something done to improve myself," and they feel colon hydrotherapy is a means of improving their function and some of them consider it to be a procedure to detox their body. And sure, I mean colon hydrotherapy in the process helps them activate and clear out the waste from the body and indirectly improve their health. So that's one group. Now, the other group of patients or clients are those people who have obvious bowel-related problems of which constipation is one of the most common as well as irritable bowel syndrome. And I treat a lot of these cases. They come in, especially with the chronic constipation. They have tried the conventional approach of taking laxatives or doing simple enemas and sometimes even resorting to digital extraction. But that keeps recurring because the fact that they are either under-hydrated or they have very sluggish bowel with poor peristalsis and for other reasons.

Q: Has it been quite successful?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh yeah, absolutely because chronic constipation, there's no alternative. If it keeps building up, it leads to fecal impaction and ultimately leads to such a distressed state and distended abdomen that they might require surgery to address the problem.

Q: So it's been...would you say a 100 percent success rate on it or close to it?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: I would say that if you treat it early enough you can avoid surgery. That's something you want to avoid.

Julie Tyler: Yeah. Can you comment on any other disorders or ailments that people would maybe suffer from in addition to distention and severe impaction? Are there other states that you see people in that you can point to colonic irrigation as being beneficial?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well personally, I believe that colon irrigation or the practice of which is called colon hydrotherapy, colon irrigation addresses the issue of hydration because the lack of hydration leads to the dysfunctional bowel which means the bowel doesn't eliminate properly and there's a buildup of waste and toxins in the body. The fact that toxins build up in the body can lead to a serious adverse consequence or negative consequence such as skin problem, allergies, eczema, they could have sinus problems, they have acne problem, and many of these problems can be resolved because after the procedure of colon hydrotherapy simply because of the effect of hydration and clearing of waste and indirectly it leads to the improvement in the problem.

Julie Tyler: Do you think that colon hydrotherapy actually can prevent what they refer to as autointoxication?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, autointoxication as a topic is still a controversial problem in the medical context. I mean the principles of it are very rational, all right; if we do not eliminate regularly or efficiently, we are going to have a buildup of toxins that are going to overload our liver as well as our kidneys and that's going to create metabolic responses and other issues that translate into medical issues. The fact that I cannot endorse it is because there is no literature or research that you can reference to support those statements and that is one of the reasons why the medical community frown on the topic of autointoxication because I mean it is hard to rationalize or to validate the fact that just simply by cleansing the body we are clearing the toxins because nobody measure toxins.

We can speculate that toxins are removed and that leads to the improvement, but how do we verify it?

Q: So all you get to go on is your personal experience.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yeah. It's all about personal experience.

Julie Tyler: And the experience of the patients.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yes.

Julie Tyler: What would you say have been your most dramatic stories or your most passionate patient stories?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, I mean there have been some very dramatic situations whereby I mean...to me, I'm a medical doctor and I believe everybody is constipated based on the fact that I carry out the procedure, I see the outcome and I know what's coming out and what's causing the problem. The most dramatic case I have is a case of an 80-year-old person, a male who had an abdomen that was distended about like that, fully distended, firm, hard and he was in distress. And radiologically it was proven he had impaction and he had what we term megacolon which means you have really a distended colon that was full of fecal matter for which there were no other options. He was actually advised surgery. If he doesn't get surgery, he will die. And the family was against surgery and they thought he was 80 years old, but they were desperate enough to seek me out. And I saw him and I was alarmed, but I say, "Hey, he's not getting anything done so let me try and do what I can." I carried out the procedure and recommended to him some other oral formulations to help activate the bowel. And in the course of about two weeks, I was able to get rid of this buildup. And it took about seven to eight sessions of cleansing. And I have pictorial evidence of that. I can show that to you and you can film that.

Julie Tyler: What did he complain of as far as symptoms aside from just general constipation? Did he mention other symptoms?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh, I mean he was obviously distressed. I mean imagine a person that's really stuffed up inside and he's all tight and tense and he's hardly able to breathe. I could only manage a photo after I cleansed out at least one session and he was already slightly distended. I mean I couldn't sit around and take photos <laughs> when he was so distressed. But even then I have a picture of him one day after and then one week after

and it was like half the size and all that. So I mean that was to me impressive. And he's still around.

Julie Tyler: You mentioned metabolically what's occurring in the body as a result of this material being impacted in the colon. What are some of the metabolic things that are going on in the body?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, the fact is that if there is a buildup of waste in the body, whatever is absorbed from our colon and our digestive tract is all filtered by the liver before the nutrients are absorbed into the blood stream. So the liver is a major organ of detoxification because it will process the nutrients as they are absorbed and filter out those that might be chemically toxic. The soluble ones are channeled and excreted through the kidneys in the urine and whereas the solid would be re-excreted through the bile duct into the small intestines and then into the large intestines. And so if your large bowel is impacted, there's a recycling of the toxins within your body. You see, whatever comes to the liver gets channeled back into the small intestine and it enters the large intestine and it just goes virtually unexcreted and that creates the toxic waste that we talk about. And that's why people who have liver failure and need a liver transplant and those who have kidney failure need a kidney transfusion or a transplant- I mean sorry, kidney dialysis.

Julie Tyler: So even though there isn't necessarily documentation that points to these things, there is definitely speculation that the liver could be compromised as a result and also the kidneys; that these organs work kind of hand-in-hand to keep the body detoxified and in good working order.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Oh yeah. I think the other part about the medical viewpoint on detoxification is that our body has an internal mechanism of detoxifying the body and it has. As I mentioned, liver is our main organ of detoxification and if you look at any medical textbooks, one of the function of the liver is detoxification. So it's like hey, the medical thinking is that you don't need to do anything else to detoxify the body. So that's another reason for the objection. And you will find that a lot of the other therapies probably will mention different perspective of it and that's fine. But I think what we need is to create a common consensus about how the procedure works. I've been teaching therapies that the procedure works through by the process of hydration which means water goes in, it softens and loosens bowel contents and in so doing, there's activation, it increases peristaltic contractions which supports the evacuation and elimination of the bowel contents, and therein lies the overall mode of action of the procedure. I mean that is undeniable and that cannot be refuted and you don't have to do research just to prove that. I mean, it's hydration, activation, evacuation. And the controversy about the open

and closed machine sometime comes to the fact that both serve the same purpose, hydration, activation, evacuation. But some people say the open system does it better or the closed system does it better or more convenient, and therein lies the debate about which system is better.

Q: So if you're working on trying to get that initiated here, these peer review studies, what about around the world? Why wouldn't other countries sort of take that rein and create their studies? Is it easier here or if you do it here the rest of the world will sort of look at it and open up?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: In fact, such studies should really be done in the States. Unfortunately, there are very few medical doctors in the States actually offering or carrying out the procedure so in that sense, there's very little opportunity for studies to be undertaken. In fact, there are more centers in Europe whereby the procedure is carried out in hospitals and some publications are forthcoming into the medical literature that supports the usefulness of colon irrigation as a procedure in the treatment of various health problems, especially bowel-related problems.

Julie Tyler: Do you think that there's more emphasis placed on prevention maybe in other countries versus the United States or do you think that we here could be the leaders with that thinking or we're poised to do the same thing?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: I think the leaders- I mean the medical establishments look at FDA and recommendations and those which are supported by medical publications. And I would say in the U.S. there's more opportunity for supporting such studies. And if we can find resources to support certain centers in carrying out such studies, it will work out.

Julie Tyler: So you think that it's likely that the FDA could get on board with helping these studies come about?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Not FDA, I mean private institutions- well private resources supporting certain establishments to conduct such studies so that it will gain FDA approval. See it's not the FDA doing it.

Julie Tyler: Right. They have a different viewpoint.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Yeah, they take a different viewpoint because FDA is actually just looking at what's available that's proven to be effective and safe because their role is to make sure that what is being recommended are effective and safe.

Q: What do you see in the long term and why this is so important? Anything you want to add?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, I would say in the years to come, I anticipate that the medical establishments will start to embrace this practice more because of the fact that it offers certain options in the treatment of problems as I say that are bowel-related like chronic constipation for which the current options are very limited. Laxatives are not quite effective, simple enema doesn't solve the problem, and aside from the occasional manual evacuation, they will then have to resort to surgery. Now this procedure can offer a management option in between those desperate cases and surgery and this is a simple option that's very effective and that's very safe too.

Julie Tyler: Do you think that the gastrointestinal physicians will be very important going forward as far as bringing awareness to this or will all doctors play an equally important role?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: The primary importance is to carry out clinical studies to demonstrate the efficacy and safety of this procedure. And what's lacking for the profession of colon hydrotherapy is the availability of good publications and that's something that we are endeavoring to address.

Julie Tyler: So it doesn't have to be gastrointestinal doctors where the information comes from in order to start the validity process.

Dr. Sylvester Yong: No, any medical doctor who has the interest can carry out the procedure and the studies.

Q: You were talking about the procedure as a means for certain kinds of ailments, but also can you mention the preventative aspect of it as well?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: Well, the advantage of the procedure is to improve the function of the bowels. I mean the chief function of the colon is storage of waste and elimination of the waste at the appropriate time. Now because of our health habits of either not eating enough fiber, not drinking enough water, or either too stress or the lifestyle, too busy to

even have time to evacuate <laughs> it creates a problem of a bowel dysfunction. And the fact that carrying out colon hydrotherapy irrigates your bowel and supports the elimination of the waste and that supports the improvement of function and avoidance of a disease that is a consequence of this dysfunction. 'Cause anything that affects the bowel in terms of its ability to eliminate waste will lead to problem of buildup of toxins that has its consequence and will affect the intestinal flora which when compromised will also affect the immune response and it reduces our immune abilities and that leads to the flourishing of the internal biological terrain that will negatively affect our body, ie. bugs in our body like parasites and yeast and bacteria. So, there are consequences of bowel dysfunction that will lead to all these imbalances and ultimately lead to disease state. So the prevention of the problem is really maintaining a healthy bowel function, true regular elimination.

Julie Tyler: Everything that you just said, are those statements that could be made by the therapist who's not an M.D. or is that something that really only an M.D. can make those claims?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: I would say that's pretty acceptable to state that.

Q: I've heard the argument that colon hydrotherapy, yes it cleans the colon, but it doesn't get into the small intestine, which also has waste. Is that true?

Dr. Sylvester Yong: No. The small intestine is for digestion and absorption. The large intestine, the colon, is for storage of waste and evacuation. Your bowel is the fundamental...well how do I put it? Anything that disaffects the bowel creates a negative consequence on your health because of the various effects that will arise. It creates a buildup of toxins, it creates an imbalance in the bowel flora that affects your immune resistance and that leads to the flare-up of the biological terrain causing more inflammation and creating intestinal permeability that allows more toxins to enter the body and that translates into health issues like allergies, skin problems and other health issues.