

FIRST AFTERNOON SESSION: Rhythm and Transition—an integrative approach to understanding the time element in women’s health

TIMES and DATES: 2:00 – 3:30 pm, SUN 4.27 to FRI 5.3, 2019

COURSE LEADER: Carmen Eppel MD

DESCRIPTION: This course will present an overview of the different physiologic patterns that characterize many aspects of women’s physical and reproductive health. This is evidenced by the very different physiologic activities seen in the pre-menarchal, menstrual, peri-menopausal and post-menopausal phases of life. The longest, middle phase, from about age 14 to 49 in most women, carries its own monthly cyclic of breast and menstrual physiology. As compared to other organ systems, women’s reproductive health is recognized to be most balanced when it follows rhythmic patterning, as evidenced by shifting hormone levels and associated alternation of regeneration and degeneration in the uterine lining (proliferative vs. secretory phases). If that alternation is disturbed then we clinically recognize that there is a loss of healthy function, which, for instance, may be demonstrated through a complete loss of menstruation (amenorrhea), or prolonged menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia). These time element offers important conceptual insights into the treatment of women’s health care. Building on these physiologic observations, consideration will also be given to other associated aspects, such as the broader physiologic and emotional experiences that come in association with different parts of the monthly menstrual rhythm, as well as the evolving experience of self throughout the different biographical and physiologic stages. Also, how consideration of larger health history, such other chronic illness, can contribute to building a therapeutic picture for the patient. A discussion of both conventional and integrative treatments for common gynecologic problems will be included, including consideration of safety and demonstrated efficacy for multiple treatment approaches.

OBJECTIVES:

- Review the expected chronological course of pubertal and menstrual development, including associated physical, emotional and social changes
- Describe the shifting hormonal and functional phases, and the associated physiologic gestures, of the menstrual cycle.
- Explore how physiologic rhythms and developmental cycles can be observed and understood as a basis for living, vital structures and what can be identified as “life processes”
- Characterize associated influences, and explore potential broader implications, of oral contraceptive and uterine contraceptives on diverse physiologic and emotional elements in women’s health

- Describe the fundamental physiological, emotional and social transitions that occur during pregnancy
- Characterize the regenerative and emotional aspects of pre-menopausal versus post-menopausal physiology, and if and when peri-menopausal changes should be treated
- Review clinical indications and efficacy of integrative treatments as a part of women's health care, including external applications as well as some sample herbal or naturopathic preparations.

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