

# Food and environment: nutritional therapy and herbal medicine hand in hand

## How long did it take for you to qualify?

I started out studying alongside my full-time job in IT. After two years, I left my job to concentrate on studying nutritional therapy and herbal medicine full-time. All in all it took three years.

I continue to study and learn each year. In the last few years I have branched out within the field of herbal medicine. I have enjoyed wonderful courses, including distilling Aromatic Waters in Wales, making essential oils in France, and learning the application of Gemmotherapy.

## Where do you practise?

I currently practise in both London and Ibiza, although I started my practice from several multidisciplinary CAM centres in central and east London, one of which I still enjoy practising from today. In London, my approach is more functional medicine based, but in Ibiza I integrate the energetic aspects of plant medicines into my practice more, as I have access to grow and harvest plants and make herbal remedies.

## What's your main therapy/modality and why?

I guess it would be naturopathy. I love the freedom of using different tools from my CAM box.

I like to use nutritional therapy and herbal medicine



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hand in hand. This I tend to do by encouraging clients to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of culinary herbs in their diet and as herbal teas, and external herbal remedies. Where possible using herbs already in their gardens or growing on their kitchen sills.

I've noticed a strong movement towards food as medicine in Ibiza; the interaction/relationship

between us, our food and our environment, the level of impact and sustainability.

## Why did you decide to become a practitioner?

After a ten-year career of banking/IT in London, I began to feel increasingly unfulfilled and less connected to the industry and wanted to explore other options.

I was always interested in natural medicine and had tried various short courses in aromatherapy and massage over the years, but it wasn't until I came across a few naturopathic medicine articles online that I decided to enroll on a naturopathic course.

## How long have you been in practice?

Since 2008/2009.

## Who or what has been the main influence/inspiration on your practice?

I've drawn inspiration from numerous sources along the way and still do. Many of my course tutors were greatly enthusiastic and motivational, and I went on to do additional studying with some of them.

I've always been fascinated by the water cure clinics of Central Europe in the mid to late 1800s. The works of Dr Edward Bach, Dr Bernard Jensen, Alfred Vogel and Dr John Christopher have also guided my work.

## What conditions or types of client do you see most?

Coming from a banking environment and having my practice based in the City gave me a great insight into what stress can do to the body and mind. So I found myself working with cases of adrenal fatigue quite a bit,

especially for the first few years of practice. Alongside dietary changes, introducing stress management techniques and lifestyle changes often proved to be the key in many cases.

In general though, I see a wide variety of health concerns. I have noticed a lot more cases of auto-immune conditions, especially in the last few years in London. I've gravitated over the last three years to having more of a particular interest in skin conditions and environmental health concerns and do quite a bit of functional medicine testing as a result.

**What do you find the easiest to treat? And why?**

Clients who are willing to learn how to improve their health. Those who want to take responsibility for their health and are committed to take the time to make the relevant changes in their diet, lifestyles and attitudes for the better, even if it seems difficult at first.

**What is your favourite type of client?**

Clients who challenge me! Those who wish to learn about preventative medicine.

Clients who want to understand the root cause of their ill-health and actively develop long-term health solutions.

**What is the most challenging type of symptoms/illness/problem that you get presented with?**

There are times when clients are sceptical about the usefulness of CAM therapies when they come to see you. Whether it's due to a previous bad experience, lack of knowledge or media influence, it's up to you the practitioner to



educate and enlighten them.

No matter what the challenge is, there are always steps that can be taken to support a client's health.

I'm always reminded of the onion strategy, especially for more complicated cases: start dealing with a layer at a time, tackling the outside layers first.

**What one thing is absolutely essential to you in your practice?**

Really listen to your client and understand their needs. Be practical, realistic and positive.

And my iridology torch!

**Do you enhance your business with any projects outside of your clinic?**

As part of my practice I make herbal medicines, including tinctures, creams, essential oils and aromatic waters. This takes up quite a bit of my time, but is also a passion.

Outside my practice, I have

started to make a range of organic skincare, mostly for family and friends, but hope to expand it to the public at some point over the next year or so.

I do contribute to articles for magazines/websites when I get the chance.

My partner is a POSE running coach who uses movement analysis with clients, so I am hoping to start a new project with him in London and Ibiza to combine the wonderful world of natural medicine practice with physical exercise and well-being.

**Which CAM book has helped or inspired you most, so far in your career?**

There are so many inspirational books out there. I'm always diving in and out of them.

I'm fond of the older naturopathic and herbal books I read during my earlier studies –

including the works of Lindlahr, together with *The Healing Power of Illness*, by Dethlefsen and Dahlke.

Not long after starting out in practice I read Maurice Mességué's *Of People and Plants*, and since then I have always incorporated herbal hand and foot baths into my practice!

I am currently reading *The Ringing Cedars* series of books, which starts with *Anastasia* by Vladimir Megre.

**Why do you do what you do?**

Because I get to exercise my logical and creative sides. Making a difference. Seeing lasting change in clients: it's so motivating, it propels you forwards.

I find it's important to learn how to be responsible for our own health (mentally, physically, emotionally) and that of the environment that sustains us. It's all connected.

**If money, time and effort were no object, what one thing would you change about your practice, or complementary and alternative medicine in general?**

I would set up an organic herb farm with an onsite integrated health practice with CAM and orthodox medical practitioners.

**What piece of advice would you give to newly qualified CAM practitioners who are just setting up a business?**

Invest in yourself! Look after yourself physically, mentally, emotionally – it will reflect on your practice well.

When you enjoy what you do it will shine through, positively impacting those you work with.



The CAM Awards are hugely successful, but we're aware they only reward and recognise a handful of practitioners and clinics each year. Meanwhile, we know that CAM practitioners are quietly getting on with changing people's lives, every day – and we want to celebrate and share the inspiration. So we've re-vamped our popular In Practice series. It is coordinated by regular CAM contributor Rebecca Smith, who runs a successful practice of her own, established 20 years ago. Contact her direct to be part of the feature: [rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@newportcomplementaryhealthclinic.co.uk), and follow her on Twitter: @NCHHealthClinic.