

The Orgone Energy Accumulator

It Is Time for Clinical Trials

By Michael Mannion

“I have no doubt that the initial hesitant reaction to the novelty and simplicity of the apparatus will be overcome and that the officials will eventually authorize the distribution of orgone accumulators.”

-Wilhelm Reich, *The Cancer Biopathy*

Introduction

To the general public, the orgone energy accumulator is probably the most widely known application of orgone energy, which was discovered by Wilhelm Reich between 1936-1939. From its introduction in the early 1940s, the accumulator has been ridiculed in the mass media, as well as in professional publications. Unfortunately, this hostile attitude continues to this day in publications such as *Time* and on late night TV shows like *Letterman's*.

However, Reich's belief that the orgone accumulator would eventually be recognized by official medicine and used therapeutically, may be realized sooner than it appears at first glance. There are subtle but significant changes taking place in society and science.

Clinical Trials of the Orgone Energy Accumulator?

In December 1997, I moderated a six-evening lecture series at The New York Open Center on the occasion of the centennial of Reich's birth. One of the speakers was James M. Gordon, MD., who discussed the profound influence that Reich had on him. Dr. Gordon, the Director of the Center for Mind-Body Medicine in Washington, DC, was recently appointed by President Clinton to head a task force on how to best integrate conventional and complementary medicine.

In reply to a question from the audience, Dr. Gordon said he thought the time was right for double-blind, controlled clinical trials of the orgone energy accumulator to be performed. He stressed that it was up to those who work with the accumulator, those who have seen or experienced its therapeutic value, to perform these experiments.

I have used an accumulator regularly since 1971 and have benefited greatly from this medical device. My experience, and the experiences of others like me, are not sufficient to demonstrate scientifically the safety and effectiveness of the orgone accumulator, but there is now an opportunity at the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine to submit proposals for clinical trials of this valuable apparatus. It remains to be seen if anyone will avail themselves of this opportunity.

If clinical trials of the orgone accumulator are undertaken, and the results confirm its

therapeutic value, the recognition of the value of the orgone accumulator by official medicine might soon follow. In the past five years, a range of “alternative” medical practices have made great inroads into conventional medicine. For example, some surgeons at major hospitals have energy healers in the operating rooms with them. Therapeutic touch has been integrated into mainstream medical practices nationwide. And many conventional hospitals have opened “Complementary Medicine Clinics” recently, offering acupuncture, chiropractic care, therapeutic touch, herbal therapy and other complementary methods of treatment.

Double-blind, controlled clinical trials of these different modalities convinced many open-minded clinicians, particularly younger physicians, of their value. In time, the same could occur with the orgone energy accumulator. The exploration of the orgone accumulator at the 40th Anniversary Summer Conference at Orgonon comes at a propitious moment, when the American public is forcing the medical profession to respond to its desire for improved health care and for access to healing modalities other than surgery, drugs or nuclear radiation.

In Reich’s era, there was no social or scientific context in which to understand his work. He stood alone. Although there were physicians and patients who appreciated his medical orgone therapy, there was no understanding of his physical orgone energy research in the mainstream scientific community. Today, the situation is changing, however slowly, and there is greater opportunity for Reich’s work to be revisited.

The Contributions of Bernard Grad, PhD

The scientific career of one of the speakers at the conference, Dr. Bernard Grad, has spanned the era since Reich’s death to the present. Dr. Grad has been a major influence on many of the men and women who are creating the new American medicine, for example, Dr. James Gordon, the best-selling authors Dr. Andrew Weil and Dr. Larry Dossey, as well as other less well-known but influential researchers such as Marilyn Schlitz, the Director of Research for the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and Dolores Krieger, a professor of nursing at New York University who developed therapeutic touch, applying Dr. Grad’s experimental findings to clinical practice.

Many researchers and clinicians have been influenced by the vast body of medical and scientific literature that has grown over the last 40 years concerning healing and energy functions in human and non-human biological systems. Dr. Grad’s early, carefully controlled research has had quite an impact, particularly his work with a well-known healer named Estabany.

Dr. Grad reported on Estabany’s healing effects on mice that had been wounded experimentally. In some of the experiments, the mice held by Estabany healed significantly faster than mice that were left alone or held by medical students. Dr. Grad also did experiments in which Estabany “laid hands on” salt water. This treated water was given to seeds which then grew faster and had higher yields than those that received untreated

water.

Wilhelm Reich's Influence on Bernard Grad

Although these and other experiments by Dr. Grad are widely known and admired today, few who hold his research in high regard are aware of his work with Wilhelm Reich and his experiments with orgone energy both during Reich's life and after Reich's death. In 1997, at a Reich centennial conference, which I organized with the Friends of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Dr. Grad was one of the speakers. Although many of those who attended were aware of Dr. Grad's research and its influence, none knew of his orgone energy investigations.

During his career at McGill University in Montreal, Dr. Grad kept his experiments with orgone energy to himself. He believed, accurately, that an open interest in Wilhelm Reich's work would end his academic scientific career. Have things changed significantly in the intervening decades? Very little, it is sad to say.

One academic opened the 40th Anniversary Conference at Orgonon with his talk, "The Orgone Energy Accumulator." However, he does not wish to be identified because he fears any association with Reich's work will have a negative impact on his academic career. A university-based scientist spoke on "Experimenting with the Accumulator and Plant Growth." He, too, does not wish to be identified, fearing his career would be harmed if it became known he was experimenting with orgone energy. Bernard Grad, PhD, who gave three presentations—"The Temperature Difference Experiment;" "Experiences with Orgone Energy Accumulators and Leukemia Mice;" and "Experiment XX" knows how they feel. He can be open about his work with orgone energy because he has retired and there can be no reprisals against him.

Can the orgone energy accumulator now be objectively, scientifically evaluated? Does a new social climate exist that would make this possible? The public is forcing the medical profession to be open to, and to investigate honestly, fundamentally different approaches to health. Could this soon include the orgone energy accumulator?

If those who work with the accumulator conduct well-designed, double-blind, controlled clinical trials, submit those results to peer-reviewed journals such as *Alternative Therapies*, and seek funding for their research from such organizations as the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, we will find out the answer to that question quickly.

We know that the leaders of mainstream medicine are not ready to investigate orgone energy objectively. But Reich's contributions to medicine and healing are also conspicuously absent from the complementary-alternative medicine (CAM) journals and the multitude of CAM conferences that are held each year, despite the fact that many leaders of CAM are aware of the value of his work—and may even use his discoveries in their practices.

It remains to be seen if the leaders of complementary-alternative medicine (CAM) are ready to conduct serious scientific and medical investigations of orgone energy or if they are as reluctant to do so as their conventional colleagues. What could be the obstacle in the way?

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