

## PSYCHONEUROIMMUNOLOGY (PNI)

Psychoneuroimmunology or PNI, is the medicine of the 21st century, the science that over the last 30 years has gained increasing recognition for being able to demonstrate the link between one's thoughts and moods and their effects on the central nervous system and the immune system. For example, mood states like sadness, depression and anger generate corresponding hormones and a range of other chemicals which adversely affect the immune and central nervous systems. We can go so far as to say that the body's cells become sad, depressed angry etc. because each cell within the body responds very precisely to the thinking, feeling aspects of the individual. Of course, cells also respond to the environment i.e., pollution, heat, cold etc., but the environment that they respond to first and foremost is the immediate environment of thinking and feeling. This is a cell's most intimate relationship, and its behaviour and function can be mapped to an individual's moods, attitudes and perceptions.

The other intimate relationship that one needs to consider in this equation is food. Everything we eat, having passed through the various digestive processes, eventually enters the bloodstream which is the life force of the body. The blood travels on average around the body 3 times per minute. In other words, about every 20 seconds, the blood in our bodies has touched every part of the organism. This amazing fact helps us to realise the ancient concept 'we are what we eat' is indeed true, because what we eat permeates our being in such a deep way, that it affects every function and organ of the body, including the brain, which must therefore have a bearing on thought processes, moods and feelings. So, the subtle and powerful relationship between food and mood also needs to be understood.

PNI has helped to accelerate our understanding of the intimate relationship between mind and body, and this is why our approach at Reach is holistic and integrative because it embraces the mind/body relationship and all their governing principles. If this important dynamic is overlooked then the way we are able to function or indeed help others find their own solutions, is severely hampered. We cannot ignore that what we eat affects the body and the way we think and feel. Conversely, we cannot ignore that the way we think and feel affects the body. It is by working with this unique and subtle relationship that true health can be achieved. A good example of this subtle relationship is when mood states like happiness, enthusiasm and positivity trigger the hypothalamus (the mood centre of the brain) to produce a range of hormones and other supporting chemicals which enhance every function in the human organism. Understanding this process helps us to see that personal growth is a journey most effective where mind and body work as one.

PNI is illuminating what the ancient civilisations clearly understood; that we are subtly and intimately connected with our biological environments. The subtle relationship of cause and effect takes place at every single level - between food and mood, between emotions and health and between mind and body. Once this relationship is understood the individual can see that all actions have consequences and therefore is able to make informed choices often leading to better outcomes.

Embracing this subtle science will enable you to reclaim healthy control in your world. So, sit back on the throne of self-respect and become the master of yourself. Stop giving away your energy and understand you really do have the power to change your reality.