

FUNCTIONAL HERBAL THERAPY

A Modern Paradigm for Clinicians



KERRY BONE

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Foreword

Christopher J. Etheridge

My life was profoundly changed when, in 2000, I discovered a copy of *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy* by Kerry Bone and Simon Mills in a London bookshop. At that time, I was debating whether to leave academia and pursue a new career in complementary medicine. This ground-breaking book was truly inspirational. It talked to me in rigorous but accessible scientific language that modernised and revitalised the practice of herbal medicine. It gave me the courage to consider studying herbal medicine as a science-centred treatment modality and to pursue a sustainable career as a medical herbalist who could support patients in a research-based, holistic way.

While studying herbal medicine at the College of Phytotherapy in East Sussex and, later, as a fledgling herbalist, I was lucky enough to be guided by the books that Kerry published subsequently, on a wide range of herbal medicine subjects, all of which have been fundamental to my growth as a practitioner. I have been even luckier to see Kerry speak on many occasions when he has presented his highly regarded and innovative seminars in the UK.

Kerry originally trained as a chemist and now has more than 35 years of clinical experience as a successful herbalist. This has given him an exceptional ability to identify and interpret key clinical studies in herbal medicine and allied fields. He is then able to concisely pull together all of the different research strands and present them in a form that is highly applicable to, and easily assimilated into, today's herbal medicine practice.

In recent years, I have been particularly inspired by Kerry's lectures, which explore functional medicine and introduce a highly significant new concept: Functional Herbal Therapy (FHT). The time is ripe for such a holistic, multi-disciplinary, multcentred model that equips herbalists to understand and formulate treatment strategies that tackle the complexity of different disease

states. Crucially, the time is right for a book exploring this fascinating and rapidly evolving area and bringing the key concepts and understandings together into one place. I was therefore excited – and relieved – when I heard that Kerry was writing this book.

In Part I, Kerry introduces the seven key attributes of FHT. These are a fusion of new research and concepts from the following areas: the Western medicine model for the pathophysiological basis of disease; the understanding of the inherent complexity of different disease states; the need for supportive and sympathetic treatment energetics; the requirement for multi-pharmacological treatments; the use of strategic, targeted therapies; the necessity for modular and pulsed dosing treatments in certain circumstances; and the requirement for a specific tissue-based support approach. Kerry goes on to examine the architecture of FHT, exploring its fundamental principles and introducing the 12 core treatment strategies that target and balance a myriad essential physiological processes. These strategies are of considerable current interest and the focus of pioneering research. They include: support of the endocrine system in its interlocking complexity; eliminating persistent pathogens; aiding the macro- and microcirculation; priming the all-important Nrf2 responses; promoting optimal digestion; and ensuring a healthy microbiome. The use of clinically effective herbs to support the 12 treatment strategies is then explored in detail, providing the modern herbalist with a complete herbal armoury to target diseases both old and new.

Part II gives the reader an in-depth look at some of these core treatment strategies of FHT. We are taken on a fascinating journey, exploring highly topical areas such as cellular protection, targeting covert invaders, limiting the damage from environmental toxins, reducing anxiety, and aiding high-quality rest and sleep. All of these strategies are essential in the modern world, where our health is impacted by environmental damage, global warming, poor lifestyle choices, and persistent viral pandemics.

Part III, the final section, critically examines how the key approaches and treatment strategies discussed in the first two parts can be successfully applied to the modern herbalist's practice. An in-depth consideration of clinically common and important disease states such as metabolic syndrome, atopic conditions, immune and respiratory health imbalances, IBS and SIBO allows the reader to see how specific treatment modules can be easily and effectively integrated into their current treatment regimes.

I am certain that this visionary book will revolutionise the way that medi-

cal herbalists and naturopaths understand and treat disease processes. It will also be invaluable to students of herbal medicine, naturopathy and pharmaceutical sciences, both as a standard text and a reference book. It provides them with a framework to examine disease states from a new and more holistic perspective; to learn about exciting lesser-known herbs; to see old, familiar herbs being used in novel ways; and to explore specifically targeted phytotherapeutic treatment regimes. By the end of the book, practitioners and students will be able to view complex disease states with a greatly expanded understanding, and to appreciate the immense potential of FHT to effectively restore the homeostatic balance and self-healing response within our patients' bodies.

I have been greatly inspired by FHT and am already applying its concepts to my own practice. As in all of Kerry's books, his enthusiasm, knowledge and vast experience continues to transform the herbal medicine world. Thank you, Kerry, for producing such an outstanding addition to our herbal medicine libraries.

Dr Christopher J. Etheridge

President of the College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy

President of the European Herbal & Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association

Chair of the British Herbal Medicine Association



Preface

When I was a herbal student in the UK in the early 1980s, a constant theme on the part of both my fellow students and other complementary medicine students I met at the time (osteopaths, homeopaths) was that Western herbal medicine (WHM) had no well-defined philosophy and prescribing system. According to some homeopathy students I enjoyed dinner parties with, it was even worse than that: the use of Western herbs suppressed symptoms the way conventional drugs do, reinforcing the chronicity of disease. All this was seen to contrast with traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, which exhibited sophisticated herbal prescribing systems that were based on a profound understanding of the human condition and our place in the universe (as you can see in Chapter 4 of this book). What seemed to be the norm for WHM was an ad hoc, empirical approach to prescribing that varied from practitioner to practitioner, loosely informed by some of the concepts of twentieth-century naturopathy, but largely using medicinal plants as “green drugs”.

However, as I became more informed about the history of WHM (especially after reading the excellent book *Green Pharmacy* by Barbara Griggs, just published at the time) and, in particular, the US herbal movements in the nineteenth century, I began to see that not only was traditional WHM informed by insightful thinking, but its fundamental concepts were still relevant to the modern situation. Gaining valuable experience from herbal practice and reading the biomedical science and herbal research, I realised that this traditional wisdom could be blended with both the latest scientific understanding of diseases and herb properties to develop a robust modernisation of Western herbal therapeutics.

To promote the value of this concept, I first advocated its characterisation under the banner “modern phytotherapy”. Eventually I concluded, however, that the term “functional” was a necessary descriptor (as proposed by

colleagues Amanda Williams and Billie O'Connor). Slowly my thoughts about what Functional Herbal Therapy should comprise became more consolidated, as they evolved with decades of insights from my clinical practice and some exciting developments in our understanding of the unique characteristics of medicinal plants. Through this evolutionary process, a fully-fledged systematic approach eventually emerged.

In Chapter 1 of this book you will see FHT defined as a system of modern prescribing for Western herbal clinicians that:

- ▶ incorporates the defining characteristics of functional medicine and applies these to the unique properties of medicinal plants;
- ▶ embraces the concept that contemporary Western herbal therapeutics should draw heavily on its empirical roots, acknowledging that the prescribing systems of key Western herbal movements, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, were essentially a form of functional medicine;
- ▶ employs diet as a positive aspect of therapy, especially with the use of phytonutrient-rich plant foods.

This text, in fact, serves two purposes. First, as per the above, it provides a detailed description and discussion of the foundations of FHT and its core strategies. Second, it provides the reader who has not been able to attend all, or even some, of my seminars with an update of the herbal therapeutic guidelines and associated prescribing information found in *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy*. Due to the pace of research, herbal therapeutics is now a constantly evolving field, so this second objective is only partially fulfilled by this book, and a further volume is anticipated.

For dosage guidelines, please refer to the monographs in *Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy*, or the condensed guide, *The Ultimate Herbal Compendium*.

Finally, the contribution of my long-time teacher, friend, and colleague Simon Mills needs to be gratefully acknowledged. Who better to write about the traditional roots of FHT than this leading thinker in the field of WHM? Simon also contributed to sections of Chapter 1, for which I am also thankful. The input of research assistant Nimisha Singh to some of the technical content of certain chapters is also recognised with thanks.

Further reading

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