

## Holistic medicine - what is it?

Holistic medicine is an approach based on the assumption that the patient's body and individual spheres of his life constitute a homogeneous whole, and treatment consists in restoring harmony in all areas of life, not only in the treatment of a given fragment of the human body.

### What is holistic medicine?

Holistic medicine is actually more of a philosophy or worldview about the practice of medicine than a specific method of healing practices. This worldview is based on a comprehensive approach to the patient, reported ailments and diagnosed diseases. The term "holistic" is derived from the Greek word holos, meaning "whole", so holistic medicine is based on the assumption that the human being - the patient - is a holistic system.

According to the assumptions of holistic medicine, both the body and soul of the patient should be treated, and improvement in one area of life also brings improvement in other areas (and vice versa). According to holistic medicine, the body, mind, soul and emotions are one, and when one fails, other areas begin to suffer as well. Another principle of holistic medicine is that you should look for the right causes of the condition, rather than just treating the symptoms. Often, doctors referring to the principles of holistic medicine use natural medicine methods in their therapeutic practice.



In holistic medicine, the patient is treated as a person - a psychophysical unity - not as a disease entity. It is also assumed that the patient will actively participate in the treatment process, not only passively undergo it. The most important principle of holistic medicine is the belief that balance and harmony at all levels of human life is a necessary condition for health and happiness.

***The motto of one of the proponents of the use of holistic medicine was: "It is more important to know what disease the patient has than what disease the patient has" (William Osler).***

Stationary hospices concern care provided in a hospital or a separate building dedicated to this type of care. Inpatient hospitals are intended mainly for patients who require - due to the severe course of the disease - constant specialist medical care (mainly in cancer patients, such as leukemias, malignant lymphomas, etc.). This type of care is also used for lonely people who do not have their own people, who could take care of a sick person.

### Treatment methods used in holistic medicine

Holistic medicine uses both methods that are the achievements of modern academic medicine and broadly understood natural medicine. The method of treatment is selected individually for the patient, because the principle of holistic medicine is that each patient is a separate, unique entity. The treatment is applied holistically - that is, somatic diseases are treated as a symptom of disorders in other spheres of life, especially spiritual and emotional. Holistic medicine assumes that restoring the balance in these spheres will also positively affect the physical health of the patient.



One paradox in palliative care is that most dying patients would prefer to stay at home, but most die in institutions.<sup>25</sup> According to palliative medicine specialists, the ideal solution would be to find resources to optimize home palliative care based on GPs, so that depending on the location, type of disease and its expected duration, patients could receive the highest standard of palliative care at all times<sup>26</sup>. According to English specialists in palliative medicine, caring for the dying person is a "test of healthcare excellence".<sup>27</sup> Saunders, the founder of the hospice movement, expressed the following motto of her activity: "You are important because you are you. You are important until the last moment of your life and we will do everything in your our power not only to help you leave peacefully, but also to live your life to the full."<sup>28</sup>