

Adventures in Psychiatry

The Scientific Memoirs of Dr. Abram Hoffer

By Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD, FRCP(C), www.KOSPublishing.com Toronto, 2005.

Abram Hoffer, PhD, MD, FRCP(C), became a pioneering psychiatrist over 50 years ago. In the 1950's, he applied the life science of biochemistry to the art of psychiatry. Not content with helping many patients recover from schizophrenia, he researched and developed biological treatments, linking diagnosis to medical care based on nutritional status and biochemical individuality. Dr. Hoffer discovered a new dimension of restorative care, complementary to the standard medications, talks and shock therapies. Over the span of his long and distinguished career, Dr. Hoffer inspired a paradigm shift based on resolving patients' episodes and restoring their mental health. His innovative and important work correcting brain chemistry was welcomed by grateful patients but frowned upon by skeptical psychiatrists.

After sharing his research and progress reports in medical journals, Dr. Hoffer realized that most doctors either ignored or dismissed his ideas — without trying them. Believing that millions of mental patients deserved better quality care, Dr. Hoffer embarked on a campaign to educate the public using books, articles, meetings and conferences.

We want to know what made Dr. Hoffer study schizophrenia so carefully. What motivated him to research, develop and foster the concept of orthomolecular medicine? What intrigues him so much that, at age 88, he still practices psychiatry and medicine, he still researches and he still writes? Hoffer's scientific memoirs share the fascinating story of his life's work and his medical adventures.

Abram Hoffer loved research and he had a kind heart, a quick wit, stick-to-itiveness, a supportive family and a knack for making friends, even with patients. Rather than take quick and easy short cuts as a keen young research psychiatrist in the 1950s, Abram Hoffer wondered what could cause the human brain to hallucinate and what could stabilize brain chemistry. The practice guidelines of psychiatry encourage physicians to differentiate the root cause(s) of each patient's symptoms before recommending effective treatment(s). True to the guidelines, Dr. Hoffer and his co-workers researched how to diagnose psychosis and restore brain chemistry by prescribing nutritional supplements — in therapeutic doses — and by improving patients' diets. A surprising number of patients recovered and kept well, as long as they continued their treatments.

What prompted Dr. Hoffer to prescribe supplements? How could nutrients restore mental health? Hoffer's memoirs explain. Dr. Hoffer and his colleague Dr. Osmond believed that unbalanced brain chemistry could be restored. By means of the first double-blind clinical trials ever done in psychiatry, they tested two vital amines: divided doses of either niacin or niacinamide (vitamin B3 — a methyl acceptor) with ascorbic acid (vitamin C — an antioxidant). For decades, their double-barreled treatment has worked better than antipsychotic medications, tranquilizers, insulin comas and metrazole therapies.

Even though thousands of patients got well enough to resume their educations, continue their careers and realize their dreams, conventional doctors scoffed at the idea that mere vitamins could resolve episodes of schizophrenia, a serious mental illness. Unwilling to let skeptics discredit his life's work, Dr. Hoffer continued his research and published the case reports of recovered patients in medical books and journals, for over 50 years. His memoirs tell the whole story.

Dr. Hoffer had many clinical adventures as he determined the optimum doses of smart nutrients for his patients and encouraged colleagues to apply his methods, worldwide. In order to share research results and educate caregivers, Dr. Hoffer wrote over 500 articles and more than 30 books including: *Niacin Therapy in Psychiatry* (1962), *The Hallucinogens* (1967), *Orthomolecular Medicine for Physicians* (1989), *Smart Nutrients* (1994), *Vitamin B-3 & Schizophrenia: Discovery, Recovery, Controversy* (1998), *Orthomolecular Treatment for Schizophrenia* (1999) and *Healing Schizophrenia: Complementary Vitamin & Drug Treatments* (2004).

Thousands of grateful patients owe their recoveries to Dr. Abram Hoffer. Thanks to his original work, vision, integrity and leadership in researching and developing restorative orthomolecular medicine, patients no longer need to suffer for decades with symptoms of schizophrenia, psychosis, depression, bipolar disorder, attention deficit disorder or autism. Hopefully, Dr. Hoffer's memoirs will encourage patients, families and caregivers to ask for restorative care; hopefully the paradigms of medicine will expand until the standards of care routinely offer orthomolecular treatments to patients with mental health problems, even schizophrenia. This won't just happen; we all need to help. If you or someone you love has a mental illness, you will enjoy reading *The Scientific Memoirs of Dr. Abram Hoffer* and getting inspired by his wonderful *Adventures in Psychiatry*.