Two Vital Perspectives The following article is contributed by two writers, a chiropractor and a naturopath. Each offers a unique and vitalistic perspective.

The germ theory states that diseases are due to specific microorganisms, which are capable of transmission from body to body. Yet although it is widely accepted by medical professionals, forming the basis for billions of dollars of healthcare spending (actually sickness care, but that’s another article), the fact that so many people believe it to be true doesn’t make it so. This is one of the classic logical fallacies: argumentum ad populum, the appeal to the majority, where a thing is stated to be true simply because so many people believe it.

That didn’t work for the belief that the earth was flat, and it shouldn’t work for a theory of disease that is increasingly coming under fire from the scientific community and whose fundamental premise was known to be flawed almost from the beginning. I am reminded of the famous quote by Anatole France: “If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.”
The Germ Theory: A Chiropractic Look at the Germ Theory

Written by Daniel A. Middleton, DC
Tuesday, 01 September 2009 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 November 2013 10:51

The germ theory states that diseases are due to specific microorganisms, which are capable of transmission from body to body. Although it is widely accepted by medical professionals, framing the basis for billions of dollars of healthcare spending (actively seeking care, but that’s another article), the fact that so many people believe it to be true doesn’t make it so. This is one of the classic logical fallacies: argumentum ad popularum, the appeal to the majority, when a thing is stated to be true simply because so many people believe it.

That didn’t hold for the belief that the earth was flat, and it shouldn’t work for a theory of disease that is increasingly coming under fire from the scientific community and whose fundamental premise is known to be flawed almost from the beginning. I am reminded of the famous quote by Aristotle: “Fifty million people or so, it’s still a Babylonian.” Everyone has heard of the Black Plague that swept through Europe in the Middle Ages, resulting in the death of nearly a third of the European population (25 million people) over the five-year period between 1347 and 1352). What is most interesting, however, is the other two-thirds—the ones who didn’t die. Many times the survivors were members of the same family as the victims, living in the same home and meals across the same family table. What about them—why didn’t they “catch” the disease? Were they just lucky?

The germ theory states that diseases are due to specific microorganisms, which are capable of transmission from body to body. Although it is widely accepted by medical professionals, framing the basis for billions of dollars of healthcare spending (actively seeking care, but that’s another article), the fact that so many people believe it to be true doesn’t make it so. This is one of the classic logical fallacies: argumentum ad popularum, the appeal to the majority, when a thing is stated to be true simply because so many people believe it.

That didn’t hold for the belief that the earth was flat, and it shouldn’t work for a theory of disease that is increasingly coming under fire from the scientific community and whose fundamental premise is known to be flawed almost from the beginning. I am reminded of the famous quote by Aristotle: “Fifty million people or so, it’s still a Babylonian.” Everyone has heard of the Black Plague that swept through Europe in the Middle Ages, resulting in the death of nearly a third of the European population (25 million people) over the five-year period between 1347 and 1352). What is most interesting, however, is the other two-thirds—the ones who didn’t die. Many times the survivors were members of the same family as the victims, living in the same home and meals across the same family table. What about them—why didn’t they “catch” the disease? Were they just lucky?

Every time we hear that a germ theory of disease is now the cornerstone of modern medicine, we are reminded of the famous quote by Claude Bernard (1813–1878), who argued that it was not the ‘seed’ (the germ) that caused disease, but was instead the ‘soil’ (the human body). Bernard argued that it was not the ‘seed’ (the germ) that caused disease, but was instead the ‘soil’ (the human body). Bernard argued that it was not the ‘seed’ (the germ) that caused disease, but was instead the ‘soil’ (the human body).

What this tells us is that modern medicine (or Big Pharma, as the pharmaceutical companies with revenues exceeding $3 billion are often called) has based its fundamental premise on a theory that even its most well-known proponent—as Pasteur arguably was—recanted in the end. For the past one hundred years, modern medicine has pursued a theory that is, at best, only a single aspect of the cause of disease and, at worst, a theory flawed at its core.

For example, if we accept the germ theory, we are implicitly saying that we can prevent or stop the disease by eradicating the germ. This is a dangerous assumption, as it ignores the fact that not all germs are dangerous. For instance, the common cold virus is not a dangerous germ, yet it causes a common cold. If we were to eradicate the common cold virus, we would eliminate not only the common cold, but also all of the antibodies that our immune system has developed to fight it. This would leave us vulnerable to many other viruses and bacteria, and could potentially lead to other, more dangerous diseases.

On the other hand, if we accept a chiropractic perspective, we are implicitly saying that we can prevent or stop the disease by improving the health of the ‘soil’ (the human body). This is a much more realistic assumption, as it takes into account the fact that not all disease is caused by germs. For instance, many diseases are caused by stress, which can weaken the immune system and make it more susceptible to infection. By improving the health of the ‘soil’, we can help to strengthen the immune system and make it more resistant to disease.

So which perspective is more accurate? The germ theory or the chiropractic perspective? The answer is that they are both valid, but they address different aspects of disease. The germ theory is useful for understanding the role of germs in disease, but it is not a complete picture. The chiropractic perspective is useful for understanding the role of the ‘soil’ in disease, but it is also not a complete picture. The best approach is to combine the two perspectives and take a holistic view of health and disease.

The germ theory states that diseases are due to specific microorganisms, which are capable of transmission from body to body. Although it is widely accepted by medical professionals, framing the basis for billions of dollars of healthcare spending (actively seeking care, but that’s another article), the fact that so many people believe it to be true doesn’t make it so. This is one of the classic logical fallacies: argumentum ad popularum, the appeal to the majority, when a thing is stated to be true simply because so many people believe it.

That didn’t hold for the belief that the earth was flat, and it shouldn’t work for a theory of disease that is increasingly coming under fire from the scientific community and whose fundamental premise is known to be flawed almost from the beginning. I am reminded of the famous quote by Aristotle: “Fifty million people or so, it’s still a Babylonian.” Everyone has heard of the Black Plague that swept through Europe in the Middle Ages, resulting in the death of nearly a third of the European population (25 million people) over the five-year period between 1347 and 1352). What is most interesting, however, is the other two-thirds—the ones who didn’t die. Many times the survivors were members of the same family as the victims, living in the same home and meals across the same family table. What about them—why didn’t they “catch” the disease? Were they just lucky?

The germ theory states that diseases are due to specific microorganisms, which are capable of transmission from body to body. Although it is widely accepted by medical professionals, framing the basis for billions of dollars of healthcare spending (actively seeking care, but that’s another article), the fact that so many people believe it to be true doesn’t make it so. This is one of the classic logical fallacies: argumentum ad popularum, the appeal to the majority, when a thing is stated to be true simply because so many people believe it.

That didn’t hold for the belief that the earth was flat, and it shouldn’t work for a theory of disease that is increasingly coming under fire from the scientific community and whose fundamental premise is known to be flawed almost from the beginning. I am reminded of the famous quote by Aristotle: “Fifty million people or so, it’s still a Babylonian.” Everyone has heard of the Black Plague that swept through Europe in the Middle Ages, resulting in the death of nearly a third of the European population (25 million people) over the five-year period between 1347 and 1352). What is most interesting, however, is the other two-thirds—the ones who didn’t die. Many times the survivors were members of the same family as the victims, living in the same home and meals across the same family table. What about them—why didn’t they “catch” the disease? Were they just lucky?