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To: BMJ

Subject: A Theory of Cure

Please consider the attached paper for publication in BMJ. This paper is written based on the concepts published in the book: **A NEW Theory of Cure, Kolenchuk, 2021**, which is based on six years of study of the word “cure,” initiated after I discovered that cure is not defined scientifically or medically for most diseases.

Over time, I gradually realized that we ignore and thus fail to understand the simplest cures and, as a result, cannot comprehend more complex cures even when they occur. This theory of cure begins with simple, elementary principles and builds to a concept of cure that can be applied to any illness, medical condition, or disease. In addition, the resulting analysis is so general that it might be effectively applied to any systemic problem – not just illnesses in living things, although non-living systems rarely contain self-healing processes.

Respectfully, to your health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracy D Kolenchuk', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tracy D Kolenchuk

## A Theory of Cure

Author: Tracy D. Kolenchuk

#503, 3 Perron St. St Albert,

Alberta, CANADA, T8N 5Z5

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# A Theory Of Cure

## Abstract

Currently, cure is not defined for most diseases. Medical references use the word treatment approximately ten times as often as cure. Although many organizations raise funds by claiming to *search for a cure*, most medical research studies do not contain a definition of cure and cannot document a case of cured when it occurs. Cures are undefined and out of scope. The paper presents a framework for an elementary definition of illness and cure based on cause. Cures address causes. Elementary cures address single, or elementary causes. There are two elementary types of illnesses based on cause. Attribute illness elements have a present attribute or noun cause and are cured by transformation of the cause. Causal illness elements have a present process or verb cause and are cured by an ongoing transformation of the causal process. All cures are changes, transformations of present cause in diet, body, mind, spirit, community, or environment of the patient. These elementary causal concepts are expanded to cover compound and complex cases of illness and disease, as well as curing, caring, and healing.

## Introduction

Current medical theory has a limited scientific definition of cure. Cured is defined medically for an infectious disease when the infectious agent cause can be addressed by an antibacterial, antifungal, or other antiparasitic medicine or by surgical removal. Cured is not defined in a

medically testable fashion for any non-infectious disease. As a result, we have no medical nor scientific test for cured in most disease cases, even though we use the word cure frequently in informal medical situations. The word cure does not appear in many current medical dictionaries (Merriam-Webster, 2008) (Black's, 1992) (Oxford, 2008) (Oxford, 2015). The London Medical Dictionary, published in 1809, uses the word cure over 500 times without defining it. No medical reference provides a definition of cure, much less an authoritative definition (Merck, 2011) (Harrison's, 2011) (Lange's, 2016) (Ferri, 2019) (DSM-5, 2013). These references use the word treatment approximately ten times as often as cure. When used, usage of the word cure is inconsistent, perhaps because many individual authors each has their own concept of cure, which changes depending on the disease under discussion. The 21st Century Cures Act authorized \$6.3 billion in funding to find a cure for cancer but does not contain nor reference a definition of cure (US Congress, 2019). Cure rate, a statistical measure of cancer disease-free survival, is one of the most common usages of the word cure. However, no individual case in any cancer cure rate group can be proven cured. A large percentage of references to cure are negative: *incurable*, *cannot be cured*, *does not cure* or vague phrases like *may cure*, *apparent cure*, and *considered a cure*, all found in the most recent version of Merck. Phrases like *cure all*, *wonder drug*, *magic bullet*, and *miracle cure* are used to dismiss cure claims in many publications.

Some medical dictionaries do not define incurable. Some define it using the word cure, even some that do not define cure (Merriam-Webster, 2008) (Barron's, 2013) (Keating, 1890). Conventional medicine defines

incurable with respect to medical treatments, “*being such that a cure is impossible within the realm of known medical practice*” (Barron's, 2013). As a result, “*there is no cure for the common cold*” (WEBMD, 2018), and similar nonsense is commonplace. We cure colds with health and healing. When we are healthier, we get fewer colds and cure them faster.

Traditional medical practices, like Hippocrates medicine, Ayurveda, and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) do not define cure and do not study cures scientifically. Use of the word cure is often trivial, inconsistent, and non-medical, as “*purgatives can completely cure the problem of excess pitta (bile)*” (Ayurveda.com, 2019). Homeopathy uses the mantra “*like cures like*” (School of Homeopathy, 2019), without a definition of cure, often referring to a cure of symptoms – also poorly defined.

Historically, the concept of cure is not studied scientifically, and references to cure are inconsistent. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, said: “*What cannot be cured by medicaments is cured by the knife, what the knife cannot cure is cured with the searing iron, and whatever this cannot cure must be considered incurable*” (Hippocrates, 1849). At the same time, he recognized that cures come from cause and from health, contradicting the prior claim with “*Diseases which arise from repletion are cured by depletion; and those that arise from depletion are cured by repletion; and in general, diseases are cured by their contraries*” (Hippocrates, 1849). Hippocrates, and today’s medical theorists focus on disease. Simple cases like the trivial surgical cure for a hangnail, the consumption of food to cure malnutrition, and the healing of minor injuries

are ignored. These illnesses and their cures are trivial – therefore unimportant medically, therefore not studied scientifically. However, they illustrate the foundation of a theory of cure.

The original 1899 version of Merck's Manual of Materia Medica contained many instances of the word cure but no definition. Many, like *rest cure*, *milk cure*, and *grape cure*, are simplistic nonsense. However, "*Iridectomy: the only cure*" (for glaucoma) (Merck, 1899) is still in use today. "*A therapeutic iridectomy is the surgical removal of a portion of the iris for the cure or prevention of an ocular disease.*" (Cline, 1997), although there is no medical test for glaucoma cured.

*"Epidemiology is more interested in prevention and control of diseases than secondary and tertiary curative approaches"* (Timmreck, 1998). Although epidemiology studies past causes of disease extensively, dictionaries of epidemiology do not contain the word cure (Last, 2001) (Porta, 2008). Usage of cure is rare and without consistency, as in the above quote where the phrase "*secondary and tertiary curative approaches*" is about prevention, not cure. Epidemiologists study diseases statistically, ignoring cures – in theory, and in practice. Cures are single cases, anecdotes, generally ignored in statistical science-based medicine.

Alternative medical practitioners use the word cure more often but have no scientific definition. There is little consistency in usage even when a cure occurs. The terms curing, healing, and transformation are often mixed and confused. Transformation is often used without a clear definition or

target. Is the patient transformed, or the disease, or perhaps “*our relationship to the disease is transformed?*” (Nunn, 1994) Alternative practitioners often claim to use holistic treatments. Which cures are holistic? “*What is holistic for one individual is frequently perceived as reductionist to another*” (Christopher Lawrence, George Weisz).

We have no medical philosophy of cure and no scientific nor medical distinction between curable diseases, conditions, disorders, disabilities, and incurable conditions. Although standard dictionaries define cure, definitions are vague and vary widely. Weak and varied definitions of *disease* also contribute to confusion around the word cure. Patients who are bitten by a rabid animal, for example, can be *prevented* (Mayo Clinic, 2019) from developing rabies with a vaccine. The Mayo Clinic does not use the word *cure*. Is it because the action occurs before the disease can be diagnosed, or perhaps because we don’t expect vaccines cure?

We might wish to believe that when a medical condition judged to be incurable is subsequently cured, the cure success has changed it to a curable disease, and the cure is documented. However, all such cases are simply ignored or actively dismissed. There are many claims of cures of arthritis, autism, back pain, diabetes, even cancer and the common cold. None can be validated without a definition of cured. Neither can they be disproven – a detail often missed.

### **Disease**

Disease is poorly defined in general. Mental disorders, defined in the

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM/5), are less well defined. There are many philosophical debates about the meaning of the word disease. The World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases takes a pragmatic view for statistical purposes: a disease is what a doctor diagnoses. The recent emergence of COVID-19 and the responses of our medical systems illustrate many of the problems. Where does COVID-19, the disease, begin and end? Is disease present in asymptomatic cases? Is the infectious stage the disease? Is hospitalization due to ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) or organ failure a different disease or part of the same disease? Is pneumonia caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus part of COVID-19 or an independent disease? Is pneumonia caused by other infectious agents, which gain a hold due to COVID-19, a part of COVID-19 or a different disease? Is COVID-PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) caused by aggressive treatment of ARDS an independent disease or a part of COVID-19? Is the loss of smell a disability, or a disease, or a symptom of COVID? Without a clear definition of the disease, we cannot define COVID-19 cured. As a result, no cures can be found, and if encountered, none can be proven, much less documented medically.

The disease concept is designed for diagnosis, preparation of a prognosis and treatment, and for statistical studies, but not to be cured. To cure and know that a cure has occurred, we must limit our view to curable elements of illness or disease.



The following framework defines the concept of causal cures in a fashion that can be expanded to cover all curable diseases.

### **Part 1: Elementary Illness**

An Illness Element or an Elementary Illness exists when a single present cause produces negative signs, symptoms, and consequences judged to be an illness. This summary is about curable illnesses. We judge an illness element cured when its present cause is successfully addressed.

An Element of Cure addresses the cause of an element of illness, resolving or curing the illness.

Judgement: An illness is a negative judgement. Cured is a positive judgement. Present cause is a judgement validated by the cure action that produced in a status change from ill to cured.

The Present Cause is responsible for the illness element, proven by a cure. A present cause can be either the presence or the absence of a thing – a noun, creating an attribute illness, or the presence or absence of a process – a verb, creating a causal illness. An absence of healthiness can also be an attribute or process cause of an illness. Causes of healthiness and illness exist in body, mind, spirits, communities, and environments. Only present causes can lead us to cures, although we often study past causes to prevent future illness.

Attribute Cause: A noun cause of curable illness is the presence or absence of a physical, mental, spirit, or community attribute which can be changed

to produce a cure. An Attribute Illness has a present attribute cause which when transformed to a non-illness-causal state produces a cure. Injuries are illnesses where the attribute cause and the illness are one and the same.

Process Cause: A verb cause of a curable illness is the presence or absence of a process of diet, body, mind, spirits, communities, or environments that can be changed to produce a cure. A Causal Illness has a present process cause which a changed to a non-illness-causal process produces a cure. Causal cure actions must be maintained, consciously or unconsciously, to maintain the cured status.

Every cure is a transformation of cause.

Healing is unconscious curing, a result of unconscious actions of the patient's body, mind, spirits, and communities, including medical communities. Healing is supported and enhanced by improving healthiness of the patient, their environment and communities. Healing can transform attributes and processes, curing attribute and causal illnesses. Most cases of illnesses are cured by healing.

Curing is the intentional process of transforming illness causes to produce cured states. There are many potential curatives for any cause of an illness. Conscious and unconscious curative intentions exist in patients and in their communities. Most illnesses are easily cured. Only difficult cases require actions by a medical community. Conscious caring is part of curing.

Transformational cures are one-time changes to an attribute cause that produce a cure. Surgery is the classical transformational cure, but most curative transformations are much less severe. Growth and healing are natural transformational cures. One-time curative changes to an attribute of a process are transformational cures.

Preventative cures are ongoing changes to a process cause that must be maintained to maintain the cured state. For example, changes to diet, exercise, and resting patterns are preventative cures. Often, the maintenance of a preventative cure becomes an unconscious action.

## **Part 2: Complex and Compound Illnesses**

An illness is the patient's view, the patient's perspective. A disease is a medical view, a medical perspective. A single case of illness might have several medical views, by different medical authorities. Sickness is a community view, a community perspective. Each patient lives in many communities resulting in many independent community views. A disease view is a community view, of a medical community. Each of the three perspectives are related but independent. Status and views of illness, disease, and sickness exist and change independently. This text uses the term illness for all three.

Consequences of Illness often include injuries and other secondary illnesses. Unfortunately, many, perhaps most diseases cannot be diagnosed until severe consequences emerge.

Acute Illnesses have transient causes and are often healed without conscious actions. However, if the signs, symptoms, or consequences are significant or dangerous, curative attention is necessary.

A Compound Illness has multiple causes resulting in the same, similar, or overlapping signs, symptoms, and consequences. The individual causes might be similar, almost identical, or independent. When an illness is compound, we need to address each cause to produce a complete cure. When addressing a single cause produces a cure, the illness was elementary.

A Chronic Illness has a chronic cause. Attribute illnesses are naturally chronic, existing until the causal attribute is transformed, unless the attribute's presence is temporary. Curing a chronic illness requires a transformation of the chronic nature of the causal attribute. Causal illnesses are naturally chronic unless the presence of the causal process is temporary. Chronic illnesses are often compound because over time, uncured illnesses can accumulate causes. A Repeating Illness exists when a cause repeatedly recurs after being addressed to produce a cure. An acute illness might cause a chronic illness. However, these causes are in the past. Although we might study them to prevent future illness, they cannot be accessed to cure a present illness.

A Complex Illness exists when an illness is the present cause of a second illness. Complex illnesses often require multiple cure actions, or complex cures. Cure sequencing can be important. A Complex Illness often causes an ongoing series of acute illnesses.

Disease: a case of disease might consist of zero to many curable elements of illness which require zero to many healing or curative actions. Most diseases are compound or complex illnesses because elementary illnesses are often cured before reaching a diagnosable state. Most cases of disease require multiple cure actions, multiple cures. As a result, today, most

diseases are considered incurable.

A Complete Cure exists when all causes of a case of illness have been addressed, healing has completed, and no more medicines are necessary for signs and symptoms.

A Partial Cure exists when some or all of the causes of an illness have been partially addressed. Judgement of partial cures of illness, disease, or sickness can range from insignificant to sufficient.

A case of illness is Permanently Cured once the cause has been successfully addressed. If the cause occurs again, a new case of the illness might result. A Temporary Cure exists when a cause of illness is temporarily addressed although it might be considered permanent until the cause occurs again.

### **Conclusion:**

Health is whole. An illness is a hole in our health. There are two types of illnesses and two corresponding cures: attribute caused, and process caused (causal) illnesses are cured respectively by attribute transformations, and preventative process transformations. All cures are changes, transformations of the present illness cause in diet, body, mind, spirit, community, or environment of the patient.

Transformation cures address attribute causes. Attributes are added, removed, or changed such that the illness is cured. An illness element cured by a transformation was an *attribute illness*.

Preventative cures address process causes with the ongoing addition, removal, or change of a process, which we must maintain to maintain the cure. An illness element cured by an ongoing change to a life process was a *causal illness*. A curative change to a process that does not require continual maintenance is a transformational cure, not a preventative cure.

The cure proves the cause. To cure is to change, to transform the cause providing a cured state.

With this framework, based on the concept of illness elements, we can combine elements, elementary causes, illnesses, and cures, to understand, create, and study cures for complex and compound illnesses and diseases.

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