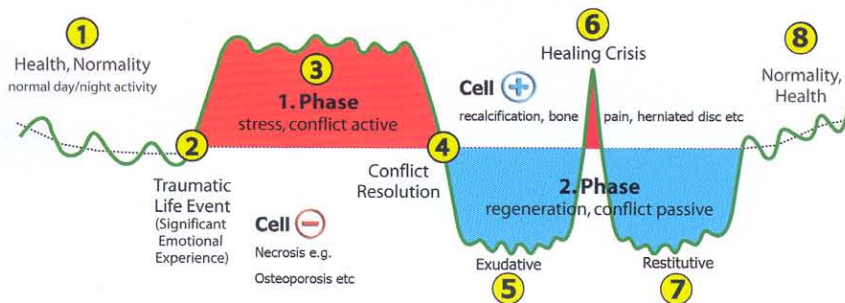


META-Medicine®:

Unlocking the mystery behind back pain and other MSDs

Musculoskeletal disorders, including back pain, arm and neck strains and joint problems, affect millions of people in the UK every year. They are the most common cause of ill health in the UK workforce, affecting twice as many people as our second biggest health concern, stress.

Figure 1: The two phases of musculoskeletal disorders



Back pain alone is responsible for over 2.5 million people visiting their GP every year. According to research body The Work Foundation, 33% of the UK population are suffering from back pain at any one time, and the condition will affect 80% of adults at some point in their lives. In the vast majority of back pain cases, GPs are unable to give a specific diagnosis. The cause of MSDs remains a big mystery.

The missing link...

We are familiar with the symptoms of MSDs, most commonly, pain, aching and loss of movement. We also have many approaches to treating or ameliorating these symptoms, ranging from physical approaches such as painkillers, surgery, physiotherapy, chiropractic, osteopathy, massage, Alexander Technique, strength training and yoga to nutritional approaches, energy work and even belief-change work - to name just a few! Sometimes, these approaches can work wonders, and other times, the pain persists. What still remains a mystery, despite the fact that these conditions affect most of us during our lifetimes, is what actually causes MSDs.

For the vast majority of musculoskeletal problems, there is no identifiable physical cause at all.

Sometimes there is an identifiable trigger - a work- or sports-related injury, an accident,

postural misalignment or repetitive strain injury. Yet there remain questions even in these seemingly clear-cut cases: why does one particular muscle get strained when a person falls, while another person who experiences a similar fall injures a different muscle? Is it simply to do with bio-mechanics? Or is it possible that one person may have a pre-existing weakness in one muscle and the other person in a different muscle?

Even if we accept a bio-mechanical explanation for the initial musculoskeletal problem, there are questions around how and why the issue becomes chronic. Musculoskeletal pain may persist, or keep recurring, for years. Yet, we know from the work of Dr Deepak Chopra that our muscle tissue is replaced after several months.

Ageing is another reason often cited as the cause of MSDs. Certainly, the longer an organ is under stress, the more severe the symptoms can be. Yet the ageing process itself is an insufficient explanation. If it were, the older we got, the more MSDs we would experience! Luckily, the evidence shows that there are an increasing number of people living active, healthy, pain free lives well into their 80s and beyond.

This brings us onto the inevitable question of genetics. The work of Dr Bruce Lipton and other epigeneticists is demonstrating that genes are not causal in 95% of diseases including MSDs); rather than being fixed, our genes are affected by our environment. Dr Lipton explains how sharing

the same environment as our families makes it more likely that we'll share the same beliefs and thus be predisposed to similar health issues.

There is a revolutionary integrative approach to understanding the meaning and process of any illness. It demonstrates how the symptoms we experience are not a mistake, they are biologically meaningful. This approach, sheds light on many of the puzzling questions about MSDs, including:

- 🕒 What causes MSDs?
- 🕒 What emotional patterns are linked to the physical symptoms?
- 🕒 What is the meaning of MSD symptoms?
- 🕒 Why do MSDs frequently become chronic?

What starts a musculoskeletal problem?

META-Medicine® explains exactly how and why the symptoms we have labelled 'disease' begin. With the exception of poisoning and accidents, all diseases begin with a **traumatic life event**. Have you ever experienced a shock in which you temporarily froze, felt your stomach somersault or had an ailing, sickening feeling? For a shock to begin an emergency disease process, it must be:

- 🕒 Unexpected
- 🕒 Dramatic
- 🕒 And we don't know how to deal with it, whether it's a major trauma or just a minor social conflict.

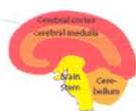
The nervous system switches into fight-or-flight, and changes begin within a specific organ. In the case of our skeletal structure, the affected organ (a specific bone, muscle, tendon etc) always follows a two-stage process (see Figure 1):

- 🕒 Phase 1: Cell reduction. This continues for as long as there are negative emotions about the shock. While the cells are decreasing, there is usually no pain.
- 🕒 Phase 2: Cell re-growth. This begins when the emotion is resolved. It continues until the bone or muscle has repaired and normalised. It is during this re-growth that pain is experienced.

What's the emotional connection to musculoskeletal disorders?

The type of emotional shock preceding a musculoskeletal issue is a **self-devaluation shock**: a feeling of a lack of self-worth. Which organ reacts depends on the specific emotion experienced at the time of the shock. The reaction is always biologically meaningful (see Figure 2 for examples).

Johannes, a man in his 40s, experienced such a shock during an argument with his partner. He felt totally devalued and thrown off balance by his partner's attack, and obsessed continuously about the argument for several days. When they made up, he felt exhausted and immediately began to experience severe lower back pain. This lasted for several days - the same amount of time he was under stress. But that wasn't the end of the story. Every time they argued and he felt walked all over, he experienced the same lower back pain shortly afterwards.



META-Medicine® Bones and their conflicts

cerebral medulla - middle germ layer - mesoderm

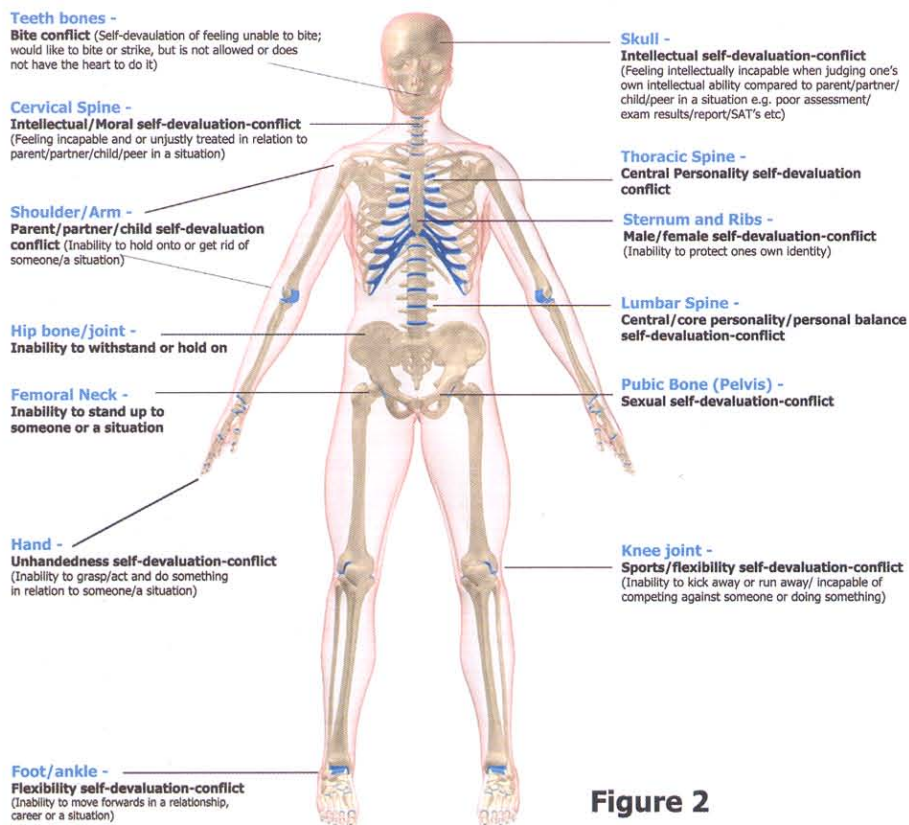


Figure 2

What's the biological meaning behind musculoskeletal disorders?

It's well known among people who do resistance training that DOMS (delayed-onset muscle soreness) is a positive sign of muscle regeneration and re-growth. It is essential during this time to take sufficient nutrients to build muscle, so that next time, lifting the same weight creates less stress on the body. This is a systemic property of the self-organisation of muscle: a biologically intelligent response. Just like DOMS occurs a day or two after weight-training, the organ regenerates after the emotional shock is resolved.

The biological meaning is in this regeneration: the strengthening of the organ in order to overcome the devaluation or weakness. The body is adapting to the needs of the situation.

Chronic musculoskeletal disorders occur when

someone experiences ongoing feelings of devaluation. An example of this is a young woman who experienced neck ache whenever she passed a test, as this resolved feelings of not being clever enough. The pattern started with the shock of an exam failure when she was at school.

The body's intelligent process in chronic cases, as also seen with bone breaks, is to make the affected organ stronger, stiffer and less flexible than before the shock, in order to prevent it from happening again.

How can this understanding benefit therapists, clients and beyond?

The diagnostic process enables us to understand the root cause and triggers of any musculoskeletal problem. By understanding the two phases, you can work out exactly where a

person is within the disease cycle, and what has to happen before they return to normal health. This approach enables individuals to overcome the root cause of their problem, rather than simply masking, ameliorating or treating the symptoms.

META-Medicine® is an integrative, bio-psycho-social model. It explains the interplay between the biological issue (for example, upper neck pain), the psychological and emotional shock (an intellectual self-devaluation conflict - feeling stupid or unintelligent), and the social environment (perhaps the workplace, in which colleagues trigger off the feeling of intellectual inferiority). Once a diagnosis has been made, the client and health coach can co-create a META-Health plan for healing at all levels:

- 🧠 **Body** - healing the specific organ and the nervous system, through diet, exercise, bodywork and remedies
- 🧠 **Mind and emotions** - clearing out the negative emotional patterns and triggers associated with the shock
- 🧠 **Spirit** - gaining learnings from the issue and growing through resolving it biologically
- 🧠 **Social and environmental** - creating new strategies for interaction within the social environment.

This approach enables practitioners to go beyond symptomatic treatment and help clients to truly overcome their issue. META-Medicine® gives clients, for the very first time, a definitive and meaningful answer to their questions: Why do I have this pain? Why in this specific part of my body? And why has it become chronic? This understanding enables individuals to heal - and grow - on all levels.

The societal implications are also huge. MSDs currently cost the NHS over £600 million per year. Along with the indirect costs, such as the impact on carers and absence from work, the HSE estimates that MSDs cost society over £7 billion a year. The profound understanding offered has the potential to benefit society as well as enable health practitioners to empower their clients. And MSDs are just one type of health issue. META-Medicine® revolutionises our understanding of all health issues, from colds to heart problems, digestive disorders and cancers. **TT**

To find out more about META-Medicine® and how it could benefit your health practice, visit www.metamedicineuk.com

Joanne Ross and Robert Waghmare, Licensed META-Medicine® Health Coaches and Diploma Trainers, run monthly talks and two-day Introductory Trainings in META-Medicine® in the West Midlands.

If you are interested in joining a training session, or if you run a training organisation, retreat or health centre and are interested in hosting a META-Medicine® seminar, please contact Joanne or Robert on 0845 838 6787 or email info@metamedicineuk.com

