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Winter Newsletter, 2016

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Upcoming Dates



President's Message



Dear ABORM Fellows:

Can you believe it's already 2016? So much has been going on in my world and I know time just flew by for me. I hope this letter finds all of you busy, thriving, and - most importantly - having a positive impact on the lives of your patients.

As president of ABORM, my goal was to establish and promote a more community-oriented energy within the organization. I feel like the vast majority of us took the exam and became fellows not JUST to demonstrate our expertise, but also to challenge ourselves and to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Let's face it, it can be tough out here. We're seeing the most difficult cases. People who aren't getting pregnant not only have that issue to deal with, but in many cases the stress is driving them crazy as well. We, as holistic providers, have the opportunity - I even consider it a privilege - to meet these people in a place of deep crisis to give them hope and smooth their journey through what could prove to be one of the most difficult times in their lives.

Not many people get that opportunity.

On top of that, our patients are often doing IVF and often still not having success. As practitioners, it can be overwhelming trying to figure out all the ins-and-outs of what to do to help.

I find that the biggest value of ABORM for me is knowing I've got you behind me, that you've got my back. I love saying to my patients that I know someone in New York or Arizona or Ohio or Illinois who can help them when they need it. I love being able to

**2016 Integrative Fertility
Symposium (IFC)
in Vancouver, BC**

Sponsored by ABORM

Pre-Symposium

Courses:

April 28th, 2016

Symposium:

April 29th - May 1st, 2016

<https://ifsymposium.com>

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Member Reminders



All Fellows first certified in 2008/2010/2012/2014 are due to renew their ABORM Membership by April 30th, 2016.

Go to the [Members Only](#) section and click on Member Renewal to download the [Member Renewal Form](#) and read about the requirements for renewal.

come to the boards and participate in the discussions and both share my knowledge and learn from all of yours.

To me, ABORM is a very special community of very special people. No offense to any other profession or discipline, but those of us in the TCM field do have a unique perspective because, well, our medicine isn't just about what to do when you're sick. Our medicine is about how to cultivate life. That mindset alone, in my opinion, sets us apart and uniquely qualifies us to do the work we do in the field of reproductive medicine and beyond.

The Integrative Fertility Symposium is right around the corner. Many ABORM fellows are giving talks, and I know many of you are planning to attend. I am so looking forward to seeing all of you there! I remember that feeling I used to get before summer camp as a kid - where I would get to see all my special summer camp friends (those of you who have been to summer camp know exactly what I'm talking about). You make special friendships at camp because those kids are in the same boat as you - away from home, together doing common activities for weeks or even a couple of months.

I feel the same way about all of you. When I get to see you guys, it's like I have a bunch of great friends who for sure get where I'm at, and know what I'm dealing with on a day-to-day basis. There are conversations we can have that, frankly, can't be had anywhere else or with anyone else.

So, I'm looking forward to seeing you as soon as I can at IFS. For those of you who won't be there, I'll be thinking of you and hope you'll consider attending ASRM or another conference down the road where we can meet in person.

Until then... Keep doing the great work you're doing, and keep striving for excellence. That's what ABORM is about - doing great work that is specialized and delivers a high degree of excellence to our communities.

All the best,
Chris Axelrad, L.Ac., FABORM



One of the most memorable lines from the movie *Field of Dreams* is unquestionably, "If you build it, they will come." Well I can certainly vouch for that. When myself and a few intrepid fertility specialists got together almost 9 years ago now to establish the

ABORM, with the dream of offering certification in the specialty of Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, I don't think any of us dreamed of the amazing community it has become. Friends,

colleagues, practitioners, and integration with our esteemed colleagues in Western reproductive medicine as well. It's all come together thanks to the passion and hard work of this community. And now this community is spreading to Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

In fact, this coming May, immediately after the Integrative Fertility Symposium in Vancouver, our ABORM President Chris Axelrad, and another one of our Board Members Katherine Anderson are taking the leap across the pond to attend the Rothenberg TCM Conference where they will be teaching on Infertility and Chinese Medicine, and where they will be meeting with TCM Fertility Specialists from across Europe and the UK to discuss the expansion of the ABORM Community to Europe. And immediately after the Rothenberg Conference, they will be traveling to Switzerland to teach a weekend course and largest Acupuncture College there.

And wouldn't you know it, our first European Fellow who took and passed the exam at last year in 2015 and attended the 1st ever Integrative Fertility Symposium is my friend and colleague Dr. Helen Lyu Abt, (FABORM). Her story is here below in the ABORM Practitioner Spotlight.

Ray Rubio, DAOM, L.Ac. (FABORM)

Executive Director/ABORM

Co-Chair/IFS

Practitioner Spotlight



Helen Lyu Abt, FABORM

I was diagnosed with PCOS when I was 16 and told by my gynecologist that I would never have children. During this time I found a caring acupuncturist where I was going to college in western

Massachusetts, named Renee Harvitt,

who took the time to listen and gave me hope about finding a way for my body to heal. This is the first time that I felt cared for by a practitioner or a doctor. I did have to change my eating habits and this is when my mentor, Annemarie Colbin, the founder of the Natural Gourmet Cookery School and Institute for Health and Healing, kicked in. Annemarie was an advocate of eating nourishing food which also tasted delicious, and that there was not one single diet for everyone.

While studying psychology at NYU was interesting, I was more interested in working with the mind-body connection. I never forgot Renee's help and care and I liked the idea to having a connection to my family (as the black sheep). My Korean great-grandfather was an acupuncturist and herbalist and taught my father before he passed away when my father was 8 years old.

I started acupuncture school in September 2001 at Tri-State College and tried to take courses with Jeffrey Yuen whenever possible. Tri-State exposed me to Kiiko Matsumoto and many different styles of acupuncture and my teachers encouraged me to develop my own eclectic style. Upon graduating I was fortunate enough to have internships with Arya Nielsen and Mark Thompson (who made Kiiko's teaching and anatomy and physiology come alive.)



As exciting as New York City is/was I wanted to see more. Although Berlin was my original goal, I ended up outside of Zürich, Switzerland. My initial intention was to improve my German enough to

study Western herbs in Germany, combine it with acupuncture and move after a couple years to Seattle. I met my husband to be, Roman, and have been here since 11 years now. Erik, our son, will soon be 7 and we are expecting another child in summertime.

I was fortunate enough to work for 8 years at one of the biggest private TCM clinics here in Switzerland and was fortunate to have an employer generous with her knowledge. The clinic specialized in gynecology and fertility enhancement.

I always thought that ABORM was an intriguing organization. When I became self employed I was looking for a teacher and further development as a practitioner. Ray Rubio became a dear mentor and meeting him (and Katherine Alexander Anderson) at NESAs in Boston made it quite clear that I needed to join. Every week I learn I learn so much from my colleagues and I am so overjoyed to be part of such a welcoming, well informed, generous group!

I work in 2 locations: Zurich and Meilen and see about 15-25 patients weekly. It is a pleasure to be able to work as I like (seeing one person at a time) and set my own hours. About 70-75% of the patients come to me due to fertility enhancement/pregnancy/post partal issues. I have a wonderful practice partner in Zürich named Bokdoek Serato and a good colleague, Esther Ott, who are wonderful resources and sounding boards. In Meilen I have a yoga teacher who specializes in hormonal yoga, pregnancy and post partal care, osteopath and other TCM practitioners. I have a good connection with many Re's and gynecologists here.

TCM is often covered by alternative healthcare here in Switzerland. Patients have grown up with a culture of herbs and many are compliant about taking Chinese herbs although they can be so bitter and not the tastiest things to drink.

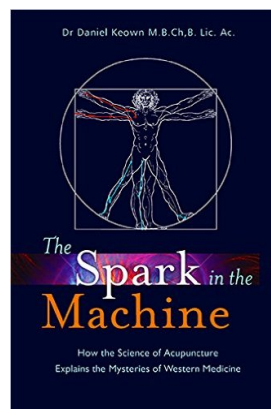
PGD was voted in by the Swiss people and finally allowed last year. Unfortunately enough people stopped it with a petition and

the Re's are waiting. Egg donation is illegal although sperm donation is legal for married hetero couples. Queer couples are in a grey area unfortunately. Most people go to Spain for procedures not allowed here. I work closely with an RE that goes regularly to ASRM congresses...although some technologies are not yet allowed.

Maternity leave could be better (Scandinavia is more ahead of us). Women often work until the last month/until the end and need to be written sick. Germany and Austria in comparison allow women to leave work earlier and keep their jobs secure for a longer period of time. Most women are only paid for 3 months maternity leave.

Often women feel enormous pressure to have a second child...after 1.5 years. I try to encourage them to give themselves time unless they have POF or advanced biological age.

New Book



The Spark in the Machine: How the Science of Acupuncture Explains the Mysteries of Western Medicine

by *Dr. Daniel Keown, M.B. Ch*

Why can salamanders grow new legs, and young children grow new finger tips, but adult humans can't regenerate? What is the electricity that flows through the human body? Is it the same thing that the Chinese call Qi? If so, what does Chinese medicine know, that western medicine ignores?

Dan Keown's highly accessible, witty, and original book shows how western medicine validates the theories of Chinese medicine, and how Chinese medicine explains the mysteries of the body that western medicine largely ignores. He explains the generative force of embryology, how the hearts of two people in love (or in scientific terms 'quantum entanglement') truly beat as one, how a cheating heart is also an ill heart (which is why men are twice as likely to die of a sudden heart attack with their mistress than with their wife), how neural crest cells determine our lifespan, and why Proust's madeleines evoked the memories they did.

The book shows how the theories of western and Chinese medicine support each other, and how the integrated theory enlarges our understanding of how bodies work on every level. Full of good stories and surprising details, Dan Keown's book is essential reading for anyone who has ever wanted to know how the body really works.