

# Main St. pharmacist has right prescription in book

By Hannelore Volpe  
Stouffville Sun

Shortly after Stouffville pharmacist Farid Wassef's book "Breaking the Age Barrier" was released last month, he took his strategies for healthier aging to TV audiences.

He was a guest last week on CHTV's "Body and Health" program on channel 11 and on Global TV's evening news talking about his ideas on staying healthy and active even late in life. He'll soon be travelling across Canada to promote the book and talk about his ideas on complementary therapies and medicines.

More than 3,000 copies of the book flew off the shelves of major Canadian book stores within two weeks of its release.

In the book, subtitled "Strategies for Optimum Health, Energy and Longevity", Mr. Wassef has distilled the knowledge he's gained in his 15 years as a pharmacist at Houston Pharmacy on Stouffville's Main Street and his 20 years of research into the roles of lifestyle, stress reduction, nutrition and alternative medicines and therapies on increasing well-being and health.

The book is co-authored by fellow pharmacist Sherry Torkos, who practices holistic pharmacy in the Niagara Region.

Mr. Wassef believes since diseases aren't triggered by just one factor, successful treatment has to be multi-dimensional too, integrating both traditional and complementary therapies.

Stress, diet, environmental factors and lifestyle all contribute to producing chronic illness. Many diseases, including allergies, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, migraines, fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis develop because a chronic inflammatory process occurs in the body.

"The increasing pain and fatigue most of us experience as we grow older is due to chronic, systemic inflammation," the authors write.

Certain lifestyle factors such as prolonged stress, smoking, insufficient rest and relaxation, not enough water, and too much caffeine and alcohol can make it harder for the body to shut down inflammation. Chronic inflammation is the major factor that leads to diseased aging, according to Mr. Wassef.

His interest in complementary methods of treat-



FARID WASSEF

ment grew from of his years working alongside his dad, Lou Wassef, who has been practising pharmacy for 50 years, 33 of them in Stouffville.

After a few years of learn-

ing about medicines, and helping to fill prescriptions, the younger Wassef was eventually led to the question, "Why, despite the best and most carefully selected drug therapy, do people continue to do poorly?"

As a teenager, he endured a painful bout of osteoarthritis in his knee, brought on by sports injuries, which eventually involved operations and chronic use of anti-inflammatory medicines. That's when he was prompted to research alternate ways of healing and, by integrating other therapies, was able to heal himself to a great extent.

In the 10 years he's run his consulting practice at the pharmacy, he has witnessed some dramatic healing stories. "This is where my moti-

vation and my excitement comes from," he said.

Whereas diseases were formerly thought to be, in large part, genetically determined, research shows people can greatly influence their health.

Mr. Wassef relates the case of a patient who went from being covered with psoriasis to having clear skin without having to take any more cortisone-based creams after a year and a half of treatment. Another person's severe autoimmune disease, which caused a painful breakdown of the connective tissues, was reversed after treatment by Mr. Wassef.

"Because it took time to develop an unhealthy state, it is going to take you some time to get well," Mr. Wassef noted.

Numerous medical practitioners have referred their patients to Mr. Wassef.

"Right now, we are not doing all we can in medicine to help improve people's health," he said.

The biggest challenge facing health care professionals in the 21st century is integrating the overwhelming amount of information that exists. "Science and medicine have become so fragmented," he said, "that we have to put it together like a jigsaw puzzle, and that is what we (the authors) have done."

Published by Viking Canada of Penguin Books, "Breaking the Age Barrier" retails at \$27 and is available at all major book stores and at Houston Pharmacy in Stouffville.

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