

The House of Wonder by a Quack: Upton Sinclair on Abrams and Frequency Specific Micro-Current

By Simon Yu, MD

In case you never heard of Doctor Albert Abrams of San Francisco, he was considered one of the notorious quack medical doctors in the early 20th century in America. He received a medical degree from the University of Heidelberg in 1882 at age 18-20 and he devised what may be the greatest medical hoax of all time.

In 1916, he published *New Concepts in Diagnosis and Treatment based on Electronic Reactions of Abrams* (ERA). According to ERA, all diseases have their own “vibratory rate” or frequency which can be measured and treated with his electronic boxes. He claims that only a drop of blood or even a sample of the patient’s handwriting would suffice as a specimen for his machine.

Abrams organized the American Electronic Research Association and sought out gullible osteopaths to become his trained practitioners. In 1922, JAMA (Journal of American Medical Association) began to expose his fraudulent claims and his taking advantage of desperate patients all over the country for profit.

Scientific American reports that the so-called Electronic Reactions of Abrams does not exist. They are merely a product of the practitioner’s mind. At best, it is an illusion. At worst, it is a colossal fraud. In 1924 *Nature*, a prestigious British scientific journal, ran short articles on the “Abrams cult”, calling ERA and his other electronic equipment, which Abrams called a dynamizer, a childish toy which defies all the laws of electrical science.

In 1922 the AMA assigned Upton Sinclair, the author of *Jungle*, to expose once and for all the fraudulent medical claims by the San Francisco quack Dr. Abrams. Contrary to what Sinclair expected, he ended up writing a favorable article against the AMA’s wishes. Upton Sinclair published his article in *Pearson’s Magazine* in June, 1922, titled, *The House of Wonder*.

In Sinclair’s essay, he said, “So I decided to go to San Francisco and investigate. I planned to spend a day or two, but what I found there held me a couple of weeks, and it might have been months or even years, if urgent duties had not called me home. I think the best way for me to present to you the work of Dr. Albert Abrams is to take you into his clinic”.

Some of the highlights of his eleven page essay include the following “...this eager and excitable little Jewish doctor is either one of the greatest geniuses in the history of mankind, or else one of the greatest maniacs. But present him with a new idea, some way to verify or perfect his work, he pounces on it like a cat. He is a veritable incarnation of Nietzsche’s phrase about the human soul, which ‘hunger for knowledge as the lion for his food.’ There is no experiment he will not try.”

“Every disease has a radio-activity peculiar to itself, and uniform and invariable. He calls this the ‘vibratory rate’ of the disease. Tubercular disease, and the tubercle bacillus and every drop of blood from a body which contains the tubercle bacillus — all these substances produce a reaction when the rheostat (ERA) is set at 42, and if the reaction does not come through at this point, there is no tuberculosis in that body.”

“Abrams claims cure, and here again we have two things to consider: first, the facts, and second, the theory. The theory may be wrong, but the facts are beyond dispute. Here in Abrams’s clinic you see it happening, and you feel as if you were watching the old-time Bible miracles. The blind begin to see, the deaf begin to hear, the lame begin to walk! I speak the literal truth when I say that after a week in Abrams’s clinic I had lost all feeling of the horror of the three dread diseases, tuberculosis, syphilis, and cancer.”

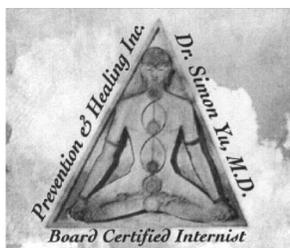
Abrams died in 1924 from pneumonia. He could not cure his own pneumonia but died a millionaire. Is he a quack or a true genius who is misunderstood?

After Abrams’s death, the electronic medicine, often called “radionic”, and its related medical field gradually disappeared from the scene of American medicine which had its own scientific breakthroughs with the inventions of antibiotics, X-rays and advanced surgical procedures. However, his idea of “vibratory rate” and frequency of the disease was never forgotten.

Since the time of Abram’s, the Frequency Specific Micro-current (FSM) Tens unit was developed by the chiropractor Carol McMakin, for neuro-muscular pain. Alpha-Stim cranial electrotherapy was developed by the neurobiologist Daniel Kirsch, Ph.D. for anxiety, depression, insomnia and general pain. This latest electro-medical technology is based on the understanding of Abrams’ theory on frequency, vibratory rate and the body’s electricity.

Frequency Specific Micro-current (FSM) therapy has been available in my practice through my licensed massage therapist, Elizabeth Barnhart. The Alpha-Stim device has been available through my adjunct staff, Randall Schilling. I have noticed some remarkable responses to difficult neuro-muscular pain, anxiety, depression and insomnia when other therapeutic modalities failed. The house of wonder built by Abrams is coming back.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories, and Dr. Yu’s revolutionary health book *Accidental Cure: Extraordinary Medicine for Extraordinary Patients*, visit his web site at www.PreventionAndHealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Call to verify the date. Seating is limited, arrive early.



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