

[Ayurveda Gets a Boost](#)

Category : [September/October 2001](#)

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HEALING ARTS

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Hundreds gather for California conference

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The California Association of Ayurvedic Medicine, CAAM, brought together 300 people for a weekend of talks, panel discussions and exhibitions from April 20 to 22 at the University of California at Berkeley. It was a time when the past, present and future of Ayurveda convened. Three Ayurvedic schools were represented— the American University of Complementary Medicine, the California College of Ayurveda and the Ayurveda Institute of Dr. Vasant Lad in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As Dr. David Frawley put it, "This in many ways was the real birth of Ayurveda in the U.S., as Ayurveda needs a community to birth in, and CAAM has created that community."

The conference began with an interdisciplinary discussion of the immune system, with a live case study. Participants included an acupuncturist from

Stanford, an immunologist from U.C. Berkeley, a wholistic practitioner and dentist, an anthroposophist and an ayurvedic specialist, all discussing the same case from the perspective of their discipline. College student Meenakshi Palani said, "I think these panel discussions were one of the highlights. Each doctor went through their different disease pathologies and prognoses, so we got to hear how one disease is treated by acupuncture, ayurveda and other healing practices. It was very exciting to hear which areas the different practitioners would emphasize."

Other topics discussed varied from the role of ayurveda in the U.S. healthcare system to diet, yoga, meditation techniques, ayurvedic pulse diagnosis, marma (akin to acupuncture points) and rejuvenation of the five sheaths of the human being. Internationally acclaimed keynote speakers included Dr. Frawley; David Simon M.D., author and Medical Director of the Chopra Center in La Jolla California; Dr. Robert Svoboda, author of twelve books and teacher at Bastyr University and the Ayurvedic Institute; and John Douillard, D.C., author and founder of LifeSpa and host of the leading medical radio talk show in Colorado. "Every day of the conference, the excitement and enthusiasm for ayurveda increased," said Meenakshi. "I was truly inspired and felt that ayurveda is ripe and ready to be felt and heard by everyone."

The California Association of Ayurvedic Medicine was founded in 1998 by a group of Ayurvedic practitioners, educators and students. CAAM is a non-profit professional organization advocating professionalism and excellence in the education and practice of ayurveda, inquiry into the scope of practice, standards of education and licensing in the state of California.

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